University of Alberta

Newspaper Framing and Stadium Subsidization

by

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ABSTRACT

Despite overwhelming evidence of a lack of positive economic benefits, taxpayers continue to vote in favor of using public subsidies to support the construction of sports facilities for major league sports teams in North America. Within this context, the local newspaper, as a beneficiary of pro-growth development strategies, becomes a platform for the debate surrounding the utility of this contentious public policy issue. This paper examined local newspaper discourse surrounding 1984 and 1990 referenda in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, and identified four stadium subsidy frames: 1) economic development, 2) civic status, 3) civic priorities, and 4) financing. Another major finding relates to the presence of frame coupling in the 1990 debate. This suggests the emergence of a dynamic discourse that fused tangible and intangible stadium subsidy arguments.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandfather, Ernest A.N. Buist, who fought bravely for this country many years ago. As a result, I am free to pursue the life that I choose. I will never forget. Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

As cities compete in an increasingly integrated and competitive global economy, entrepreneurial local authorities seek (re)development opportunities to position and differentiate their respective communities in order to attract mobile flows of capital (Harvey, 1989). Rosentraub (2003) noted that urban development initiatives most often focus on two main strategies: large scale developments and neighbourhood-centered revitalizations. Large-scale development strategies typically include investments in tourism and entertainment sectors, while neighbourhood-centered strategies focus mainly on the improvement of community amenities. In light of decreasing financial support from higher levels of government in the U.S., these (re)development projects are of particular importance to post-industrial urban centers – such as Baltimore, MD, and Cleveland, OH – as many of their traditional manufacturing concerns have relocated abroad (Sassen, 1990).

The construction of professional sport stadiums has emerged as one method of large-scale urban infrastructure development, particularly in U.S.-based urban centers (Chapin, 2004; Euchner, 1993; Rosentraub, 1997, 2003). These facilities often involve large public sector contributions – since 1987, over $13.4 billion has been used to subsidize stadium construction (Baade, 2003). For example, Swindell and Rosentraub (1998) reported that some communities have invested more than $500 million in sports facilities, and Long (2005) estimated the average public subsidy for Major League stadium construction to be $175 million. Thus,

subsidizing a professional sport stadium is an expensive endeavour for urban centers.

Due to the artificial scarcity and mobility of major league franchises (c.f. Leone, 1997; Vrooman, 1997), stadium subsidizations have often been motivated by the desire of various civic actors to attract or retain a major league franchise, and traditionally framed by supporters as a public investment that will generate significant economic benefits for the host community (Euchner, 1993; Rosentraub, 1997). Most independent empirical research, however, has found the tangible economic benefits derived from stadium construction to be suspect (Baade, 1987, 1994, 2003; Baim, 1994; Coates and Humphries, 1999, 2003; Quirk and Fort, 1992). Thus, it has been suggested that proponents of such policy increasingly shift the focus of the debate to 'non-measurable endpoints' (Delaney and Eckstein, 2003, p. 200), and argue that stadium development provides the community with valuable intangible benefits such as increased status and psychic income (Crompton, 2004). As a result, urban centers in the U.S. continue to allocate significant financial resources to subsidize professional sports stadiums (Baade, 2003; Long, 2005). Mondello and Anderson (2004) reported that 20 of 26 (77%) stadium subsidy referendums held from 1990 – 2000 passed. Despite the lack of evidence of economic benefits, stadium subsidy proponents have clearly been successful selling their position to voters.

This raises interesting questions related to the subsidy issue: in the absence of positive economic benefits, how do taxpayers come to view stadium subsidization as a wise public investment? And, what messages are being conveyed in order to

make sports facilities seem integral to communities? Rosentraub (2003, p. 1) noted that large-scale development strategies, such as stadium construction, most often draw support from elite growth-oriented civic actors, especially corporate leaders in local real estate, financial, and media firms. The urban governance literature suggests that these private sector actors often play a role in civic policy development (Elkin, 1987; Stone, 1989). For example, Hamilton (2004, p. 455) suggested that city governance is a "collaborative process of informal partnerships between public and private actors". Both groups are thought to benefit from, and thus support, expansionist policy. Public officials benefit from the publicity involved with the promotion of innovative urban projects, such as major land use initiatives, while private sector actors often have significant land interests and are therefore attracted to urban development through land use schemes, such as stadium construction (Elkin, 1987). As they benefit from such polity, these groups often use their significant resources in order to push forward an agenda of urban expansion (Moltoch, 1976).

Within this context, the local newspaper has been conceptualized as a place - dependent, growth-oriented, civic actor (Cox and Mair, 1988; Elkin, 1987; Moltoch, 1976) that relies on local corporate concerns and residents for revenue generated through advertising and circulation. As a beneficiary of expansionist urban policies, the local newspaper may bias reporting in favour of pro-growth initiatives, including stadium development (Delaney and Eckstein, 2008; Friedman and Mason, 2004; Turner and Marichal, 2000; Rosentraub, 1997; Sage, 1993). This is particularly important as the media – including the local newspaper

– are thought to influence public opinion through the way in which issues are framed (Reese, 2001). For this reason, it is critical to understand how newspapers frame the stadium subsidy debate.

Frames are found within texts, through keywords, phrases and images, and provide interpretive schemes, which help individuals make sense of issues and events (Entman, 1993, p. 52; Reese, 2001, p. 7). The concept is important – especially in a political situation – given the impact that frames have on opinions and behaviour. For example, in their prospect theory research, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) found that frame manipulation influences the decisions individuals make when faced with choice problems. A stadium subsidy referendum can be viewed as a choice problem of sorts, where constituents may vote 'for' or 'against' a specific proposal. As the growth-oriented local newspaper provides a platform for the interested civic actors to argue their position(s) on various issues – while simultaneously acting as an important source from which citizens obtain local business and political information (Stempel 1991, 2004) – the local newspaper is an ideal location to examine the framing of issues such as stadium subsidization. In doing so, it provides a window into understanding the messages citizens receive about stadium development projects, and why they are (or are not) worthy of public support.

While numerous studies examine the subsidization of professional sports stadia within the U.S. (c.f. Brown and Paul, 1999, 2002; Delaney and Eckstein, 2003, 2008; Euchner, 1993; Friedman and Mason, 2003; Rosentraub, 1997), the way in which local media organize the discourse surrounding the issue has not

received extensive attention (Delaney and Eckstein, 2008). Thus, the purpose of this paper was to explore the local newspaper discourse surrounding the subsidization of professional sport stadiums. More specifically, this study examined the way in which a local newspaper framed the debate surrounding the proposed subsidization of two stadium development projects in Cleveland, Ohio – the 1984 Domed Stadium initiative (which failed), and the 1990 Gateway Project proposal (which passed). The paper is organized as follows. Following a review of the framing literature, a brief description of the two cases, and an overview of methods, results of an analysis of newspaper frames surrounding two stadium subsidy debates are provided.

Theoretical Framework: Media Framing

Framing is a popular theoretical framework employed within the field of communication research (Bryant and Miron, 2004) and variants of the concept have been employed within a diverse variety of academic disciplines, including: economics, sociology, psychology, linguistics and political science, among others (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 60). Generally, frames are thought to aid in the organization of experience, and can be conceptualized as "schemata of interpretation" that allow users to "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms" (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Similarly, Reese (2001, p. 11) defined frames as, "*organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world". Frames, therefore, provide context and create meaning for their audience (c.f. Gamson and Modigliani, 1989).

Frames are found within texts and "manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Frames organize experience through the selection and presentation of issues, as well as through the way in which certain issue attributes are emphasized or excluded (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss and Ghanem, 1991; c.f. Gitlin, 1980), as Entman (1993) advanced,

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (p. 52)

Framing, then, is an active process where sponsors structure discourse in order to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (Entman 1993, 2004, 2007; c.f. Reese, 2001). Frames often have multiple sponsors, and Gamson (1989, p. 158) argued that, "all senders – whether journalists or sources – should be regarded as sponsors of frames". Sponsors employ various symbolic devices in order to frame issues, including: metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989) and can structure discourse in order to frame an issue in multiple ways (Gamson, 1989). Abortion, for example, is often framed as a 'pro-choice' or 'pro-life' issue (Reese, 2001). Similarly, in their study of public opinion regarding nuclear power, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) found the media discourse surrounding the issue to be organized into seven distinct frames.

Through the selection and emphasis of issues and their attributes, frame sponsors have the ability to manipulate the opinions and actions of their audience (Bryant and Miron, 2004; c.f. Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). It is important to note, however, that framing issues sponsors are not necessarily engaged in a conscious effort to deceive (Gamson, 1989). Furthermore, framing involves active interpretation on the part of the audience whereby frames are integrated with their previous knowledge and life experience in order to generate meaning and guide action (Pan and Kosicki, 1993).

As framing can have significant implications on individual opinion formation, it is especially important in the context referenda situation where public opinion is manifested through voting support or opposition of a proposed issue. Thus, the proposed study is focused on the way in which the 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates in Cleveland were framed within the local newspaper. In each case, stadium proponents and opponents used the local newspaper as a platform to engage readers as to why a new facility was required or not required, respectively. This study provides a rich natural setting from which to explore the framing concept, particularly so given that referenda results can be used as a proxy for public opinion in each case.

Background

In 1984, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, – which includes the central city of Cleveland – voters defeated a proposed property tax increase to fund a $150 million domed stadium. The facility was to house both professional baseball and football franchises. Several local political officials presented vocal opposition to

the financing plan and it was defeated soundly, as 65.4% voted against the proposal. In 1990, however, Cuyahoga County voters approved a sin tax measure – a levy on cigarettes and alcohol – to finance the proposed $355 million 'Gateway Project', which consisted of a baseball stadium, basketball arena and surrounding commercial development in the downtown central market district. The margin of victory for the Gateway Project was narrow, passing with 51.7% support, despite more unified consensus among the local public and private sectors regarding the merits of the proposed development. The domed stadium and Gateway Project debates are described in greater detail in Appendix A and B, respectively.

The city of Cleveland is an ideal site to examine local newspaper framing subsidization of professional sport stadiums for three reasons. First, the construction and subsidization of professional sports stadiums has a long history in Cleveland. In 1928, city voters approved the use of public funds to finance construction of the 78,000-seat Municipal Stadium at a time when sports facilities were predominately privately financed (Crompton, 2004). The facility eventually played host to Cleveland's major league football and baseball franchises. Second, stadium construction has been a major component of Cleveland's urban (re)development strategy and, as such, represents a prominent – and politicized – local public policy issue (Rosentraub, 2003, 1997). Using Cleveland as the research site for this study, then, allowed the authors to examine the local newspaper framing of both an approved and a rejected stadium subsidy referendum, while holding the research site constant. Third, since 1982 the city

has been serviced by only one metro daily newspaper, the *Plain Dealer*. Thus, for both the 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates, the only metro daily newspaper frames received by the local community were those contained within the *Plain Dealer*. Additionally, the *Plain Dealer* boasts the highest circulation of any newspaper in Ohio. Accordingly, the newspaper is a prominent news outlet for the citizens of Cleveland and the surrounding area. As the construction and subsidization of professional sport stadiums represents a prominent local public policy issue in Cleveland, it should be highly salient in the *Plain Dealer*.

METHODS

This paper sought to identify the dominant frames contained within the *Plain Dealer* that organized the debate surrounding the 1984 and 1990 proposed stadium projects in Cleveland, Ohio. Furthermore, the current research aimed to examine the similarities and differences between the stadium subsidy framing in each case. As such, a multiple case study research design (Yin, 1989) was employed. Multiple case study designs involve the examination and comparison of several case studies in order to generate what Yin (1989, p.53) described as 'replication logic'. In this sense, each case within the study serves as an experiment that allows for comparison across cases. Entman (1991, p. 6) observed the importance of comparison when examining frames:

> Comparing media narratives of events that could have been reported similarly helps to reveal the critical textual choices that framed the story but would otherwise remain submerged in an undifferentiated text. Unless narratives are compared, frames are difficult to detect fully and reliably.

Microfiche copies of the *Plain Dealer* – from August 1983 through December 1984, and from August 1989 through December 1990 – were manually scanned for contextual and referenda specific articles, editorials and letters to the editor. Newspaper accounts from after the stadium subsidy referenda – coincidentally held on May 8 of each year in each case – were not formally analyzed as the focus of this study was to examine the way in which the *Plain Dealer* framed the stadium subsidy issue, with particular attention paid to the potential impact these frames had on public opinion as manifested through the voting results of the referenda under study.

Detailed field notes were maintained, and supplemented by contextual data drawn from the newspaper and allowed the researcher to build a rich description of the political, social, and economic environments surrounding the 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates (see appendix A and B). A modified content analysis (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005) of both manifest and latent content found within the *Plain Dealer* was employed. Berg (1998, p. 226) defined manifest content as, "the surface structure present in the message" and noted that latent content represents, "the deep structural meaning conveyed by the message". The focus on latent content is important as, "media texts often contain only portions of a frame and rely on audiences to infer the rest based on their existing cultural knowledge" (Edy and Meirick, 2007, p. 125; c.f. Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). The modified content analysis was completed in three phases as outlined below.

First, referenda specific data (articles, editorials, and letters to the editor) were coded into one of three categories to identify their stadium subsidy position: *pro*-subsidy, *con*-subsidy, or *neutral*-subsidy. The *pro*-subsidy category included newspaper coverage that demonstrated general support for the stadium proposals, with the *con*-subsidy category featuring overall negative support for a stadium or stadium subsidy. Newspaper coverage was categorized as *neutral* where there did not appear to be predominate support of – or opposition to – the stadium subsidy. This portion of the coding was forced choice, where all data were assigned to one stadium subsidy position category. Second, codes were developed in order to identify the way in which the stadium subsidy issue was framed within the *Plain Dealer*. A review of the literature on the stadium subsidy debate identified that both tangible (increased jobs and tax revenues) and intangible benefits (civic status, psychic income) were typically found in the debate over funding sports facilities (c.f. Brown and Paul, 1999, 2002; Crompton, 2004). While these were used as a starting point for analysis, stadium subsidy frames were allowed to emerge from the data. Third, a chronologically ordered matrix (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was constructed in conjunction with the case study database in order to organize the coding and analysis of data; sorting occurred by the stadium subsidy position, as well as all stadium subsidy frames identified within each subsidy specific article, editorial, and letter to the editor collected.

RESULTS

During both stadium subsidy debates, newspaper coverage was often clustered around significant project announcements from local private and public sector actors involved with the issue. Table 1 details the results of the data collection by year, position, and data format. In both the Domed Stadium (1984) and Gateway Project (1990) subsidy debates, the majority of articles collected presented a neutral stadium subsidy position, while most letters to the editor opposed the projects. Not surprisingly, given that the local newspaper benefits from a pro-growth agenda, no editorials in opposition to the stadium subsidy issue were published in the *Plain Dealer* during either time frame examined. In the 1990 debate, articles were generally more supportive of the stadium subsidy than they were in 1984. In 1984, only 11% of articles were supportive (with 14% in opposition), whereas in 1990, 15% were supportive (and only 7% opposed the subsidy). However, this change is even more pronounced when coverage in the *Plain Dealer* leading up to each referendum is examined. Table 2 features a breakdown of coverage in the week of May 1-May 8 in both 1984 and 1990 (both referenda were held on May 8). Coverage leading up to the Gateway Project referendum in 1990 demonstrated more support for the stadium subsidy than coverage published during the same time period leading up to the Domed Stadium referendum in 1984.

Table 1
Data Collection Yields

	Domed Stadium (1984)				**Gateway Project (1990)**				**Totals**
	Pro	Con	Neutral	Total	Pro	Con	Neutral	Total	
Articles	11	14	72	97	24	11	123	158	**255**
Editorials	16	0	3	19	12	0	4	16	**35**
Letters	24	52	10	86	30	71	5	106	**192**
Totals	**51**	**66**	**85**	**202**	**66**	**82**	**132**	**280**	**482**

Table 2
Pro-Stadium Subsidy Position, May 1 – 8

	Domed Stadium (1984)			**Gateway Project (1990)**		
	Pro	Total	%	Pro	Total	%
Articles	2	11	18%	9	29	31%
Editorials	2	2	100%	5	5	100%
Letters	2	10	20%	10	15	67%

Another means of examining the way in which the stadium subsidy debates were presented can be found by examining the frequency of articles regarding this issue that appeared on the front pages of sections within the *Plain Dealer.* A summary of front page coverage can be found in tables 3a.and 3b. This finding suggests that the 1990 Gateway Project debate was more salient than the 1984 Domed Stadium debate within the local newspaper. Furthermore, relative to the coverage in 1984, articles that demonstrated support for the Gateway Project were

found on the front page of *Plain Dealer* sections more often than articles in opposition to the issue – especially during the eight day period in May leading up to the 1990 referendum.

Table 3a
Front Page Articles (All Sections)

Front Page Articles (All Sections)	**Domed Stadium (1984)**	**Gateway Project (1990)**
Pro	1 front page 'pro' articles / 11 total front page (9%)	17/24 (71%)
Con	4/14 (29%)	6/11 (55%)
Neutral	31/72 (43%)	79/123 (64%)

Table 3b
Front Page Articles (All Sections), May 1 – 8

Front Page Articles (All Sections) May 1 – May 8	**Domed Stadium (1984)**	**Gateway Project (1990)**
Pro	0/2 (0)	6/9 (67%)
Con	1/3 (33%)	0/2 (0)
Neutral	1/6 (17%)	8/18 (44%)

Stadium Subsidy Frames

Once data were coded for their stadium subsidy position, analysis focused on identifying stadium subsidy frames. Four general frames organized the discourse surrounding both the 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates: 1) Economic Development, 2) Civic Status, 3) Civic Priorities, and 4) Financing. These stadium subsidy frames are described below. Appendix C outlines the frequency

of the four frames by type of newspaper account (article, editorial, letter to the editor) and stadium subsidy position for both debates. The percentages appearing in Appendix C represent the presence of frames in newspaper coverage coded as pro, con, or neutral. For example, 55% of all pro-subsidy articles concerning the 1984 referendum contained an economic development frame, while all neutral editorials concerned with the 1984 stadium subsidy debate contained a civic status frame. As will be discussed below, many articles, editorials, and letters contained multiple frames.

Economic Development

The 'Economic Development' frame included discussions and comments regarding tangible economic benefits – such as employment opportunities, municipal tax revenue, and spin-off developments – that would (or would not) be generated by the proposed stadium projects. This frame was identified frequently throughout the local newspaper discourse surrounding both stadium subsidy debates, but it was more prominent during the 1984 Domed Stadium debate. During both 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates, the economic development frame was most often used by proponents in order to support their position. The committees organizing the campaign to promote the stadium proposals noted their marketing efforts would focus on the potential economic benefits of the project (cf. Rutti, 1984a; DeLater, 1990a). For example in January 1984, when Cuyahoga County Commissioner Vincent Campanella announced the domed stadium proposal, he argued the project could revitalize the local economy and provide employment opportunities for county residents: "The construction alone would

create at least 3,000 jobs" (Rutti, 1984b, p. A1). During the announcement, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Commissioner Virgil Brown agreed and claimed that "[the domed stadium] will create a lot of jobs and will increase commerce downtown" (Rutti, 1984b, p. A10). In the weeks following the domed stadium announcement, several prominent civic actors including City Council President George Forbes, and NFL Browns owner Art Modell projected the facility could generate significant spin-off development opportunities (cf. Rutti, 1984b; Suddes and Sartin, 1984; Heaton, 1984).

In 1990, the economic development frame was also employed by stadium proponents to support their position. For example in January, the *Plain Dealer* reported that leading Gateway supporter Thomas Chema suggested the proposed stadium project "would be but one part of an overall redevelopment of the Huron-Prospect corridor around the Central Market. That area would eventually include an indoor arena, parking, a hotel and commercial buildings" (Kissling, 1990a, p. A14). Similarly, County Commissioner Mary Boyle – a vocal domed stadium opponent in 1984 as a State Representative – characterized the Gateway Project as "an economic development proposal that can actually benefit the entire Greater Cleveland community" (Kissling, 1990b, p. A1). Cleveland Mayor Michael White, also a stadium development proponent, argued, "Debate on the Gateway campaign should focus on the economic impact which the Gateway project will have on this community" (White, 1990, p. B5).

While the economic development frame was most often used by stadium proponents to support the subsidy, some opponents employed this frame to argue

against the issue. For example, in a letter to the editor published in January 1984, Cuyahoga County resident L.J. Zrimec disputed the potential for the stadium development to offer long-term employment opportunities: "The 3,000 jobs to be created is pure hokum. No job in construction will last long enough to be of any value. As each phase of construction is completed, the job ends. I wonder just how many jobs our existing Stadium provides" (PD, January 22, 1984, p. AA5). Similarly, Cleveland resident Theresa Slivka questioned the length of potential employment opportunities that could created by the proposed stadium development: "The dome will not provide jobs that will last a young man or woman from 25 to 40 years to feed his or her family. The dome is only a short term job. What happens to the jobs of those people after the dome is built?" (Slivka, 1984, p. AA5).

Civic Status

The 'Civic Status' frame included discussions and comments that supported (or opposed) the notion that stadium development would provide the community with an increased social standing. While the economic development frame centered on the potential tangible outcomes of stadium development, the civic status frame focused on the potential intangible outcomes of the project, such as community pride. Although this frame was prominent in the local newspaper discourse surrounding both stadium subsidy debates, it was identified more frequently during the 1990 Gateway Project debate.

Similar to the economic development frame, during both 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates, the civic status frame was most often employed by

stadium subsidy proponents in order to support their position on the issue. Also, like the economic development frame, proponents promoted the positive impact the projects could have on civic status during the campaign for both the Domed Stadium and Gateway Project proposals (Rutti, 1984a, DeLater, 1990). Supporters argued the stadium projects would enhance the image of the community – in absolute terms and relative to other cities. For example, proponents of the domed stadium suggested the facility would allow Cleveland to host prestigious mega-events – such as the NFL Super Bowl and, potentially, the Olympics – which would, in turn, revitalize the city and positively reflect the vitality of the community (cf. Andrzejewski, 1984). Domed stadium supporter, County Commissioner Vincent Campanella, argued the project would provide residents with an opportunity "to change in one fell swoop...the national image of Cleveland" (Rutti, 1984a, p. A1). Likewise, Bert Wolstein, a local real estate developer, said the proposed stadium development would ensure Cleveland kept pace with other top-tier cities (Rutti, 1984b). Thus, proponents of the domed stadium stressed the facility could provide a symbol of civic progress (cf. Talbott, 1984).

Similarly in 1990, Gateway Project supporters argued the proposed stadium development represented an opportunity for the community to continue its momentum of civic progress. For example, stadium development proponent and Cleveland Mayor Michael White stated: "Recently, we've made advances because of our community's determination to improve itself. We must keep going forward. Rejection of the Gateway project would stop our momentum as we seek

to become the great American community that we should be" (White, 1990, p. B5). This was reiterated by Cuyahoga County resident, Nicholas Giorgianni who claimed: "if downtown Cleveland is to continue its renaissance, it is essential that Cuyahoga County residents vote in favor of [the Gateway Project] on May 8... A vote for this issue will continue the magnificent progress this city has made for the past 10 years" (Giorgiannni, 1990, p. B12). Furthermore, Gateway supporters indicated the project had the potential to position Cleveland as a global urban center. For example, local Congressman Edward Feighan said: "I think Cleveland is on the verge of becoming a world-class city, and it needs a world-class facility of this nature" (Luttner, 1990, p. A12).

Opponents of the stadium projects were characterized as pessimistic and lacking both pride in the community and faith in its future. As such, few challenged the positive impact the stadium projects could have on civic status. In both 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates, a vote for the stadium projects represented a vote for an improved and progressive future, while a vote against the projects the represented a vote against an improved and progressive future. For example in 1984, the *Plain Dealer* argued: "By voting [for the domed stadium], voters...will be taking some of the steam from the cynics who deride the Cleveland area as a place that does not deserve to be on the country's list of progressive, contemporary and economically diverse communities" ("Help the city; approve the dome," 1984, p. AA10). Similarly in 1990, the *Plain Dealer* characterized the leading Gateway opponents – Dennis Kucinich and the United Auto Workers union – as "naysayers and doomsayers", and "opportunists who

preyed upon the misery of a declining city" ("Vote Yes: Gateway to the future," 1990, p. C2).

Civic Priorities

The 'Civic Priorities' frame grounded the stadium subsidy debate within the broader scope of community needs, such as infrastructure (roads and bridges), educational system, health care, and emergency services personnel. This frame was most often used by opponents of the stadium subsidy to support their position on the issue. Opponents of both the 1984 Domed Stadium and 1990 Gateway Project pointed to other pressing civic needs as more important than the proposed facilities, while supporters argued these other community priorities, while important, need not necessarily preclude the stadium developments.

In early 1984, several social service agencies pressed the Cuyahoga County Commissioners to place a health and human service levy renewal on the upcoming May ballot. County Commissioner Vincent Campanella, however, was reluctant to do so as the issue would then compete with the domed stadium proposal (Rutti, 1984c). In response, Robert Bond, executive director of the Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Center Associates argued: "The stadium is not the issue. We are concerned about keeping the current level of services" (Rutti, 1984c, p. A8). In an editorial the *Plain Dealer* explained the health and human service levy was "crucial in the county's delivery of social service programs, day care, mental health and welfare", and noted the agencies required the funding given the depressed local economic conditions ("Stadium? Social services? Or both?," 1984, p. AA4). Furthermore, the *Plain Dealer* suggested the two issues

should not be viewed as mutually exclusive: "The health and human services renewal levy will guarantee the maintenance of important social and welfare services. Those needs should take precedence over a sports complex, *but need not preclude it* [italics added]" ("A head-on collision," 1984, p. A14), but noted that some voters might be compelled to choose between the two issues if they shared the same ballot. In order to avoid the potential ballot conflict, the Commissioners delayed the health and human services levy renewal until the November 1984 ballot. Some civic actors, however, were not satisfied with this political maneuver, and maintained the dome stadium should not be placed above other community needs. For example, State Representative and domed stadium opponent Carl Stokes remarked: "There is a fundamental problem of misguided priorities.... [The domed stadium] ignores what must be the No. 1 priority: meeting human needs" (Rutti and Clark, 1984, p. A16).

Similar civic issues were also prominent early in the debate surrounding the Gateway Project. In August 1989 shortly after MLB Indians owner Richard Jacobs requested public funds to develop a new baseball facility for his major league franchise, Cuyahoga County Commissioners Mary Boyle and Timothy Hagan noted they were more concerned with other pressing civic matters. For example, Commissioner Boyle stressed the approval of both the health and human service levy and the county jail construction bonds were "the priorities of this government" and questioned: "Have [stadium proponents] been paying attention? Do they know about the jail? Do they know about the health and human service levy?" (DeLater, 1989, p. A1). As such, Commissioner Boyle and Hagan opposed

placing the potential stadium issue on the November 1989 ballot. However, both the health and human service levy and the construction bonds for the county jail addition were approved by voters during the November 1989 ballot (Torassa and Thoma, 1989). This ensured that neither issue would share the public agenda or the May 1990 ballot with the Gateway Project proposal. Also, Gateway proponents did not contend with a proposed city income tax increase or a major infrastructure program during their campaign for the stadium development.

Financing

The 'Financing' frame focused on the overall cost of the projects, the appropriateness of using public funds to subsidize private industry, as well as the funding responsibility of city, county, and state governments. This frame was significantly contested and was used by both proponents and opponents to support or oppose the 1984 and 1990 proposed stadium developments. In January 1984, Cuyahoga County Commissioners announced a plan to finance construction of the domed stadium project through a bond issue supported by a countywide property tax increase. Stadium consultants Ronald Labinski and David Grieger outlined the proposed $150 million financing plan "would cover the cost of construction, parking, site improvements, professional fees and land acquisition and still leave about $10 million for contingencies" (Rutti, 1984a, p. A13). Domed stadium supporters suggested the financing proposal presented by the Commissioners was a good deal for county residents. For example, *Plain Dealer* editor, Thomas Vail remarked, "The price is right. For a $150 million stadium, a person with a house appraised for $50,000 would pay $14 a year for 30 years" (Vail, 1984, p. AA4).

Proponents of the domed stadium also argued that public sector financing for the project was necessary. For example, Commissioner Virgil Brown commented, "I don't think we're going to see private money [build a domed stadium]. I think it's a function of local government" (Rutti, 1984b, p. A10). Similarly, the *Plain Dealer* stated, "A domed stadium cannot be built in Cleveland without some source of public funding" ("The university and the dome," 1984, p. A14).

Domed stadium opponents, however, argued that public money should not be used to subsidize private industry, and suggested that the individuals who benefit from the facility should fund the project. For example, Cuyahoga County resident Craig Miller commented, "I think that the developers, team owners, concessionaries, politicians, and contractors – those who will financially benefit from the new stadium – ought to be the ones who finance it" (Miller, 1984, p. AA5). Furthermore, Cleveland Mayor, George Voinovich, and Ohio Governor, Richard Celeste, argued the County Commissioners should not rely exclusively on real estate taxes to finance the proposed facility (cf. Rutti and Sartin, 1984; Sartin, 1984; PD, Rutti, 1984d). The *Plain Dealer* reported that Mayor Voinovich suggested: "Future tenants, including sports entrepreneurs, should pay much of the cost of the project.... Industrial revenue bonds, low interest loans issued by the local governments that are frequently tax-free, could be used to help build the stadium" (Rutti and Sartin, 1984, p. A1).

Despite the assurances from domed stadium supporters, several local public sector actors pressed County Commissioners to diversify project financing in order to limit the public contribution. At the request of Mayor Voinovich,

Commissioner Campanella agreed to search out other sources of financing for the domed stadium project to reduce the cost to county taxpayers (Sartin, 1984). The *Plain Dealer* reported that Mayor Voinovich and the Commissioners would lobby Governor Celeste to provide state funds for the project (Sartin, 1984). Governor Celeste, however, refused to commit state funds to the domed stadium project and continued to vehemently dispute the property tax financing plan proposed by the County Commissioners (Celeste, 1984). Similarly, State Representative Mary Boyle, a political ally of Governor Celeste, remarked: "The vote on May 8 is a property tax increase. This is not the right way to pay for a facility like this" (Rutti, 1984e, p. A5). The civic leaders did not resolve their differences regarding the proposed financing of the domed stadium project and it remained a key issue polarizing the debate. This was noted by the *Plain Dealer* in an editorial published shortly before the May 8, 1984 referendum: "The single real point of contention – between politicians, community leaders and residents alike – is financing" ("The university and the dome," 1984, p. A14).

In January 1990, local public officials agreed to move forward with a sin-tax financing plan for the proposed $260 million stadium development (Kissling, 1990c). The development – later to be known as the Gateway Project – included a stadium, an arena, and surrounding commercial development. The *Plain Dealer* reported the sin-tax levy would be applied to alcohol and cigarette products sold within the county and would raise approximately $18 million per year over 15 years (Kissling, 1990c). The local newspaper also reported that Governor Celeste indicated the proposal would be placed on the May 8 ballot for public approval.

Proponents of the Gateway project attempted to distance their sin-tax financing plan from the failed property tax increase that was promoted to fund the proposed domed stadium in 1984. For example, Cleveland Mayor and vocal stadium development supporter, Michael White, explained, "The Gateway project would not cost one penny in property, sales or income tax, and it is the policy of our administration not to offer tax abatement for its development" (White, 1990, p. B5). Furthermore, Gateway proponents characterized the project as a "50/50 public/private partnership" and underscored the significant contribution that would be made by the local private sector (Figgie, 1990; White, 1990). In contrast to the domed stadium proposal, local officials secured commitments from both potential anchor tenants, the MLB Indians and the NBA Cavaliers. Shortly before the May 8, 1990 referendum, the *Plain Dealer* announced that both major league franchises signed revenue sharing and lease agreements in principle (DeLater, 1990b; DeLater, 1990c). The agreements indicated that the team owners – not county taxpayers – would be responsible for facility operating expenses.

Like supporters of the proposed domed stadium in 1984, Gateway Project proponents characterized the development as a good deal for county residents. For example, in an editorial published on the front page, two days before the May 8, 1990 referendum, the *Plain Dealer* noted "the public will own the new sports facility after paying only half the cost of building them" ("Gateway to the future," 1990, p. A1). Furthermore, Mayor White stressed the cost of the proposed sin tax to county taxpayers would be negligible: "The cost to our citizens would be minimal. A person who smokes a pack of cigarettes a day would pay $7 a year....

The cost on a glass of wine would be 1.7 cents, and a drink of liquor, 3.7 cents" (White, 1990, p. B5).

DISCUSSION: FRAME COUPLING

The existing literature examining stadium subsidy debates generally acknowledges two distinct discourses that focus on either the tangible or intangible benefits that would (or would not) accrue to the host community (c.f. Brown and Paul, 1999, 2002; Crompton, 2004; Howard and Crompton, 2004). The four stadium subsidy frames identified in this study can be separated into similar categories. The economic development, civic priorities, and financing frames focused on tangible arguments for (or against) stadium subsidization, while the civic status frame was focused on intangible arguments. While the stadium subsidy frames identified roughly correspond to tangible and intangible categories present within the literature, they were found to be significantly interactive and dynamic entities. This point will be discussed further below.

The results of this study provide support for Delaney and Eckstein's (2003) finding that stadium subsidy proponents are shifting the debate towards difficult to measure intangible benefit arguments. Appendix C indicates that stadium subsidy proponents employed the civic status frame more frequently 1990, while employing the economic development frame less frequently. This study also found that during both the 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates in Cleveland – despite significantly varied levels of support within the local public and private sectors – the editorial position of the *Plain Dealer* remained notably biased in support of the proposed stadium subsidy in each case. Furthermore, the large

number of *neutral*-subsidy articles published by the *Plain Dealer*, is consistent with Delaney and Eckstein's (2008, p. 85) concept of 'hybrid media coverage' where stadium subsidy discourse was found to be somewhat ambiguous – neither fully supportive of, nor completely opposed to the issue.

In addition, the examination of the 1984 and 1990 stadium subsidy debates in Cleveland revealed the existence of frame coupling. More specifically, the results of this study indicate that stadium development supporters, at times, fused tangible and intangible stadium subsidy frames. Interestingly, stadium subsidy frame coupling was only found within discourse that supported the proposed 1990 Gateway Project. Frame coupling created a dynamic discourse that moved beyond the traditionally distinct tangible or intangible classification of stadium subsidy justifications.

Financing and Civic Status

In 1990, Gateway Project supporters emphasized the private sector contribution to the development in order to differentiate their sin tax financing plan from the increased property tax proposed to fund construction of the failed domed stadium in 1984. Furthermore, Gateway proponents argued the proposed financing plan was better structured relative to similar stadium development projects in other US cities. In doing so, they often coupled the financing and civic status stadium subsidy frames. For example, Gateway negotiator Oliver Henkel Jr. remarked,

> The public would own Gateway 100% while paying only 50% of its capital costs. Unlike Baltimore, St. Louis or Chicago, where the public

> sector is coming up with all the money to build new sports facilities, the teams and the private sector in Cleveland have agreed to pay for half. This financing plan, which has more private capital contributions that any baseball stadium built in this country in nearly 30 years is something of which we are justly proud. It is a plan the public can support. (Henkel, 1990, p. B5)

Similarly, stadium subsidy supporter Mayor Michael White argued, "The cost to the business community and the teams would amount to $174 million. *Nowhere in America* [italics added] have the business community and the teams committed so much money to a similar effort" (White, 1990, p. B5). Likewise, local Congressman Edward Feighan added, "My conclusion is that [the proposed sin-tax] is an issue that should be supported throughout the county.... It is perhaps one of the best financial plans for a public stadium or arena in the entire county" (Luttner, 1990, p. A1).

These statements provide examples of tangible (financing) and intangible (civic status) stadium subsidy frame coupling supporting the proposed sin tax financing plan for the 1990 Gateway Project. The arguments made by the Gateway Project proponents suggest that Cuyahoga County residents should take pride in – and therefore support – the proposed financing plan as it represented a better deal than was reached in other US cities. In other words, the subsidy supporters argued that intangible benefits relating to community pride would accrue to county residents resulting from the tangible benefit of advantageous stadium financing.

Economic Development and Civic Status

Gateway Project proponents also argued that the economic development generated by the proposed facilities would enhance the civic status of Cleveland. For example in an editorial published in April 1990, the *Plain Dealer* commented on the impact a new sports facility would have on Cleveland: "The downtown area will boast new shopping areas, upscale hotels and restaurants, the rock 'n' roll hall of fame, and the sports complex. *Few cities will be in Cleveland's league* [italics added]" ("Gateway to Cleveland's future," 1990, p. E2). Likewise, Cuyahoga County resident Harley Rose suggested that the stadium project would stimulate "mass urban renewal" including new hotel developments, and attract major conventions and high profile sporting events (PD, September 7, 1989, p. B12). As a result he argued that, "Slums would disappear and thousands of good-paying jobs would be created. Cleveland would no longer be the national joke" (Rose, 1989, p. B12). Furthermore, *Plain Dealer* editor Thomas Vail advanced a similar argument,

> Our failure as an urban area to act with strength and unity on an issue like [a stadium project] is too awful to contemplate. We could lose the Indians, the extra convention business, the taxes, more new hotels, the momentum of developers. Failure will lead towards minor-league status and mediocrity for our urban area. (Vail, 1989, p. E2)

These examples provide further evidence of tangible (economic development) and intangible (civic status) stadium subsidy frame coupling. The stadium subsidy supporters implicitly argued that Cleveland's status would be improved through the economic development generated by the proposed stadium development. In

other words, Gateway Project proponents advanced that Cuyahoga County residents would reap intangible benefits not necessarily from the facility itself, but as a result of the tangible benefits generated by the facility.

Financing, Economic Development, and Civic Priorities

Frame coupling was not limited to the fusing of tangible and intangible stadium subsidy frames – Gateway Project proponents also linked the tangible financing, economic development, and civic priorities frames. For example, Gateway public relations consultant Thomas Andrzejewski remarked,

> The tax burden here is on those who drink and smoke. The tax benefit here is on all the people of Cuyahoga County, particularly the disadvantaged who use the services that will be paid through newly generated revenues from payroll taxes and property taxes the stadium, arena and related economic development will produce. (Chalfant, 1990, p. B5)

In a similar argument, Mayor Michael White commented,

> If Gateway is defeated we will have forgone a significant economic opportunity for our community.
>
> It's more than the teams, more than being a big-league city.... It's our ability to address the whole question of employment and to provide needed funds to government to do some things the opponents what us to do in education, in parks and recreation, in date care...in drug rehabilitation. (Kissling, 1990d, p. A23)

Furthermore, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Mayor White planned to allocate a share of the city's profits from the development to a neighborhood development fund (Kissling, 1990d, p. A23). Both statements provide examples of tangible

stadium subsidy frame coupling. Mayor White linked two tangible stadium subsidy frames (economic development and civic priorities) in an attempt to counter the opposition argument that public funds should not be allocated to stadium development as the community faced other, more important, needs. Likewise, Andrzejewski fused financing, economic development, and civic priorities frames to make a similar point. In both examples, proponents used frame coupling in order to support arguments for the public subsidization of the proposed Gateway Project.

CONCLUSION

Despite overwhelming evidence of a lack of positive economic benefits, taxpayers continue to vote in favor of using public subsidies to support the construction of sports facilities for major league sports teams in North America. However, certain local interests, including local real estate, financial, and media firms tend to benefit from pro-growth strategies that may include major league sports facilities. Within this context, the local newspaper, as a beneficiary of pro-growth strategy, becomes a platform for the debate surrounding the utility of publicly subsidizing facilities. As a result, it is important to understand how the debate is framed and in cities considering facility construction.

This paper examined the debate surrounding two referenda in the City of Cleveland, Ohio, and identified four stadium subsidy frames in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*: 1) economic development, 2) civic status, 3) civic priorities, and 4) financing. Consistent with the literature's consideration of the local newspaper as a beneficiary of a pro-growth agenda, the *Plain Dealer* was a significant

proponent of the stadium subsidy in both cases. This was shown through the volume of positive coverage and the overall editorial position taken by the newspaper. It was also shown that supportive coverage of a subsidy intensified leading up to the May 8 ballot in both the 1984 and 1990 votes.

Another major finding relates to the presence of frame coupling in the 1990 debate. This suggests the emergence of a dynamic discourse that fused tangible and intangible stadium subsidy arguments. More specifically, proponents of the proposed Gateway Project in 1990 embedded economic justifications for the initiative within a broader social context to argue for the public subsidization of the development. Although there are many factors that led to the passing of the 1990 vote as opposed to the failure in 1984 – including more consensus amongst political leadership, the construction of multiple facilities in 1990, and a different financing mechanism (sin vs. property tax) – one might consider that the proponents of the proposed stadium development in 1990 used frame coupling to develop a more sophisticated and persuasive argument for the use of public money to build the new facilities.

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APPENDIX A

Case Study 1 – The Domed Stadium (1984)

On September 15, 1983, Patrick O'Neill, the new board chairman of the Cleveland Indians, held a press conference to announce that his family's charitable trust was planning to sell their majority ownership position in the Major League Baseball (MLB) franchise (Hagan and Miller, 1983a). The trust gained control of the team with the passing of former Indians owner, F.J. O'Neill in late August. His ownership position in the franchise was transferred to an organization – The O'Neill Foundation – operated by a group of trustees, which included members of his immediate and extended family.

F.J. O'Neill, a local transportation and real estate entrepreneur, initially bought an ownership stake in the Indians in 1961. However, he sold his interest in the franchise 12 years later to join a group – lead by George Steinbrenner – that acquired the New York Yankees. In 1978, O'Neill sold his position in the Yankees and purchased a controlling interest in the Indians for $6 million, and $5 million in assumed debt. The Cleveland MLB franchise was financially troubled, reportedly losing over $10 million from 1981 to 1983 (Schneider, 2001). Furthermore, beginning in early 1983, the team was mired in a legal battle regarding their existing lease at their home field, Municipal Stadium ("Indians Are Suing," 1983). Despite the financial and operational difficulties, O'Neill pledged to keep the team in Cleveland and refused offers from several groups interested in relocating the franchise.

During the press conference on September 15, Patrick O'Neill outlined that owning the MLB franchise was not an appropriate investment for the charity, and suggested that local officials create a situation that would attract a qualified buyer to the community (Hagan and Miller, 1983a). However, O'Neill noted that while the trustees would make a concerted effort to keep the team in Cleveland, they would not reject an offer from an out-of-town suitor (Hagan and Miller, 1983a). The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reported that civic officials from Tampa Bay were interested in acquiring a MLB franchise, and planned to meet with the O'Neill family in order to discuss purchasing the team (Hagan and Miller, 1983a). This led to speculation that the Indians could be moved.

Following the press conference, public officials attempted to rally support behind efforts to retain the Indians. Cleveland Mayor, George Voinovich, stated that losing the local MLB franchise would significantly damage the community in both financial and psychological terms (Grande, 1983). Voinovich urged Stadium Corporation – the entity responsible for managing Municipal Stadium – to negotiate a favorable lease agreement for the Indians, and outlined that that if the team was offered a long term lease, he would ask city council to waive the admissions and real estate taxes paid by the MLB franchise (Grande, 1983). The Mayor argued that Cleveland must compete with other communities that offer lucrative public subsidization packages to their professional sports teams. Interestingly, Cleveland Utilities Director, Edward Richard, noted that there had been serious discussions among local officials surrounding the potential development of a 35,000-50,000-seat domed stadium (Hagan and Miller, 1983a).

Richard, however, outlined the city had no plans to finance such a facility. Art Modell, Stadium Corporation head and owner of the NFL Browns, pledged he would support the Indians if they wished to move into a new local stadium (Hagan and Miller, 1983a).

Ohio Governor, Richard Celeste, also advocated against the potential relocation of Cleveland's MLB franchise. On September 19, Governor Celeste promised to use his political influence to help keep the Indians in Cleveland, and proposed a state-funded study to gauge the feasibility of building a domed facility to host both Cleveland State University (CSU) events and major-league baseball (Larkin, 1983). The study, as outlined by Governor Celeste, would examine both construction and operating costs of a joint-use, 45,000- to 50,000-seat facility that would replace the proposed $57 million, 16,000- to 17,000-seat CSU arena and convention centre. As the university spent $120,000 in 1982 to fund a 7-month study for the planned arena and convention center, CSU president, Dr. Walter Waetjen, insisted the institution would not pay for the new study (Farkas, 1983). Furthermore, Dr. Waetjen was concerned about the potential cost of the proposed new development, and stressed that the facility should be designed to benefit both the university and the community (Farkas, 1983). The CSU buildings and grounds committee met later in the week and approved the new study that was scheduled to be completed by the end of the year (Farkas, 1983).

On September 24, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Governor Celeste, Mayor Voinovich, and City Council President, George Forbes, held a private breakfast meeting with local business leaders to discuss the future of the Indians (Hagan

and Miller, 1983b). While Voinovich and Forbes stressed the negative implications of losing the local MLB franchise, Celeste said that he believed the O'Neill family was committed to keeping the team in Cleveland if possible. The public officials, however, took the threat of potential relocation seriously and urged the private sector leaders to support the team by purchasing tickets for next season (Hagan and Miller, 1983b).

The next day, Governor Celeste held a private lunch meeting at his residence with Cleveland public officials and MLB executives. Discussions surrounded various alternatives to avoid potential relocation when the eventual sale of the local MLB franchise closed ("Celeste's Pow-Wow," 1983). MLB Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, American League President Lee MacPhail, Mayor Voinovich, Council President Forbes, and an Indians minority owner, Alva Bonda, were in attendance. Patrick O'Neill, board chairman of the MLB franchise, did not attend the meeting. Governor Celeste outlined that the public officials stressed their preference that the Indians remain in the community after the sale. While the Governor described the session as productive, the attendants declined to comment extensively regarding the meeting ("Celeste's Pow-Wow," 1983).

On October 21, Patrick O'Neill suggested that the O'Neill Foundation remained interested in finding a local buyer committed to keeping the Indians in Cleveland (Pluto, 1983). O'Neill revealed that he had been contacted by groups from Denver, Indianapolis, New Orleans, and Tampa regarding the pending sale of the MLB franchise. Despite the significant interest from out-of-town investors, however, he noted the foundation would be willing to sell the Indians at a

discount in order to keep the team in the community (Pluto, 1983). O'Neill outlined the family held discussions with 14 individuals interested in purchasing the team, and were working to narrow the list of potential buyers to three in the near future (Pluto, 1983).

Edward DeBartolo and Donald Trump emerged as the early frontrunners to purchase the Indians. Debartolo was a successful real estate developer with a significant portfolio of sport properties. Despite his significant financial resources, and demonstrated interest in professional sports franchise ownership, DeBartolo's 1980 ownership bid for the Chicago White Sox was rejected by MLB commissioner Kuhn due to his involvement in horse racing (Dolgan, 1983). Given DeBartolo's previous difficulty acquiring a MLB franchise, the O'Neill family was apprehensive regarding his interest in purchasing the Indians (Dolgan, 1983).

Donald Trump, also a successful real estate developer, was actively pursuing investment in professional sports franchises. He initially made an offer for the Indians in June 1982, but was rejected by F.J. O'Neill who was not interested in selling the MLB franchise (Grossi, 1983a). With the franchise now for sale, Trump renewed his interest in purchasing the team. His reported bid of $34 million for the Indians was $9 million higher than the closest offer – reportedly designed in order to entice the O'Neill Foundation to accept an out-of-town buyer (Grossi, 1983b). While Trump publicly stated his primary objective was to keep the team in Cleveland, he declined to put an agreement to that effect in writing (Grossi, 1983c). Former Cleveland resident, David LeFevre, a New York lawyer and close friend of the O'Neill family, and Cleveland businessman, Walter Laich,

minority owner and board member of the Indians, were also reported to be interested in purchasing the MLB franchise (Pluto, 1983).

In late 1983, two significant economic issues emerged on the public agenda in Cleveland. First, on November 21, facing a reported $16 million deficit in 1983 (Sartin, 1983a), and an estimated $17 million deficit projected for 1984, City Council members voted 17-4 to place a 25% city income tax increase on a county-wide ballot scheduled for February 1984 (Sartin, 1983b). The plan was proposed by Mayor Voinovich and called for an increase in income taxes from 2.0% to 2.5% for residents and commuters. The tax increase would generate approximately $27 million in revenue for the city in 1984 (Sartin, 1983b). The Voinovich administration hinting at plans for potential layoffs and significant social service spending cuts in order to balance the city budget should the proposal be defeated (Sartin, 1983c). Second, on December 9, the *Plain Dealer* reported a 24% increase in property taxes for Cleveland homeowners was to take effect in 1984 due to a school-operating levy that passed in November – the first such issue to pass in Cleveland since 1970 – and an accounting error that distorted past property tax totals (Rutti, 1983).

At a press conference held on January 8, 1984, Cuyahoga County Commissioners presented plans to construct a $150 million, multi-use domed stadium in the Central Market district of downtown Cleveland (Rutti, 1984a). The proposed facility would be financed through an increase in property taxes to support a 30-year bond issue. County Commissioners indicated they would seek public approval for the plan on a county-wide ballot scheduled for May 8 (Rutti,

1984a). Preliminary designs for the facility included seating configurations for multiple sports, including: football, baseball, hockey, soccer, basketball, tennis, and special events such as concerts. The plans detailed a potential 70,000-seat capacity for football, 50,000-seats for baseball, 25,000 seats for basketball, and approximately 15,000 portable seats. The *Plain Dealer* reported that the preliminary designs included the potential for the stadium to be equipped with the world's first retractable dome, and suggested the facility could be a possible host site for the NFL's Super Bowl (Rutti, 1984a).

During the press conference, County Commissioner Chairman, Vincent Campanella, argued the facility would generate significant economic development within the county, and denied the dome was proposed in an effort to help retain the local MLB franchise (Rutti, 1984a). He outlined the stadium would be privately operated, and thus county taxpayers would not be responsible for operating expenses. Furthermore, Campanella said that an independent committee would be formed to ensure the construction process would be prudently managed (Rutti, 1984a). Commissioner Virgil Brown also promoted the positive economic benefits of the project, and suggested that public money was necessary to finance the facility. Commissioner Timothy Hagan said he was pleased the issue was being presented to the public to allow an opportunity for debate, but noted that education and health care funding were his main priorities (Rutti, 1984a).

Initially, reaction to the domed stadium proposal presented by the County Commissioners was mixed. Interestingly, neither Governor Celeste nor Mayor Voinovich pledged their support for the proposed facility. The *Plain Dealer*

reported that both officials intended to wait for the results of the revised CSU study – that was re-scheduled to be completed in March – before endorsing any stadium proposal (Rutti, 1984a; "Celeste Won't Take," 1984). Governor Celeste indicated that collecting all of the information regarding the stadium issue was the only prudent course of action as county taxpayers were being asked to finance a large portion of the proposed facility ("Celeste Won't Take," 1984). Meanwhile, Mayor Voinovich urged local officials to follow the Governor's leadership on the issue (Rutti, 1984a).

Despite the reserved response from Governor Celeste and Mayor Voinovich, Council President Forbes praised the domed stadium initiative, and urged city council members to unanimously support the proposal as outlined by the county commissioners (Suddes and Sartin, 1984). Forbes argued the facility would stimulate development downtown, and suggested the state funds allocated to the CSU arena and convention center be used to support the dome stadium. Several local private sector actors were also impressed with the proposal. Art Modell stressed the project could act as a catalyst for economic development, and reiterated the potential for the facility to host the NFL Super Bowl game (Rutti, 1984a). Bert Wolstein, real estate developer and owner of the local MISL franchise, argued the domed stadium would ensure Cleveland's place among elite cities (Rutti, 1984a). Wolstein also noted that he planned to invest in an outdoor soccer team that could play at the facility if the dome was retractable.

The dome stadium proposal presented by the County Commissioners also drew support from the *Plain Dealer*. In an editorial published on January 11, the

local newspaper criticized the position of Mayor Voinovich regarding the stadium issue ("Why Silence," 1984). The editorial suggested that Voinovich did not endorse the domed stadium initiative advanced by the county commissioners as he was focused on garnering support for his proposed 25% city income tax increase. The editorial rebuked the Mayor's wait-and-see approach, and urged him to take leadership role in the matter ("Why Silence," 1984). On January 15, Joseph Rice, a *Plain Dealer* columnist, accused Governor Celeste and Mayor Voinovich of politicizing the stadium issue (Rice, 1984a). Rice contended that both Governor Celeste and Mayor Voinovich viewed County Commissioner Campanella as a political threat, and thus refused to support his stadium proposal. Rice noted that Campanella was discussing the possibility of running for Governor in 1986, and suggested that if Campanella scored a major political success, such as the approval of the domed stadium proposal, he would likely challenge the Mayor as the top Republican official in Cleveland (Rice, 1984a). Also on January 15, Thomas Vail, *Plain Dealer* editor, wrote an editorial that strongly supported the domed stadium proposed by the County Commissioners (Vail, 1984). In the editorial, Vail argued that the facility would create employment, spur significant surrounding economic development, and revitalize Cleveland's downtown core. He lauded the efforts of the County Commissioners and City Council for pushing the issue forward, and questioned why Mayor Voinovich would not support the proposal (Vail, 1984).

While most of the initial coverage regarding the domed stadium initiative was positive, the local newspaper also published reports that questioned the merits of

the proposal. For example, Thomas Andrzejewski, a *Plain Dealer* urban affairs columnist, wrote an article on the New Orleans Superdome, and drew parallels between Cleveland and New Orleans, in order to examine the potential economic and social impact of domed stadium construction (Andrzejewski, 1984). In the article, Andrzejewski outlined that the Superdome was publicly financed, and was sold to taxpayers as a tool for economic revitalization. Andrzejewski noted that construction of the facility was plagued with massive cost overruns, and it did not resuscitate the economy as promised. He outlined that although both contractors and tourists derived substantial gains from the Superdome, the average taxpayer realized only a marginal benefit, if any. Finally, Andrzejewski urged local taxpayers to carefully examine the proposed financing method for both the CSU arena and the domed stadium presented by the County Commissioners (Andrzejewski, 1984).

The *Plain Dealer* also reported that State Auditor, Thomas Ferguson, questioned why the County Commissioners proposed the domed stadium while a feasibility study of the similar CSU facility was underway (Suddes, 1984a). Commissioner Campanella suggested that Ferguson's opposition was political – Ferguson defeated Campanella in the election for state auditor in 1982 – and argued that county voters would ultimately decide the fate of the domed stadium. Ferguson also asked how the facility would be affected should the local major league teams decide to relocate. Commissioner Hagan responded that the commissioners would ensure a commitment from the local franchises before moving forward with the project (Suddes, 1984a).

In the weeks following the County Commissioners' announcement, local public officials engaged in political posturing as the domed stadium initiative competed with other issues on the public agenda. On January 17, several social service agency representatives urged the county commissioners to place a renewal of the health and human services levy on the May 8 ballot (Rutti, 1984b). The representatives argued that should the renewal fail in May, it could be returned to the ballot in November. Commissioner Campanella stated that he was not prepared to discuss placing the health and human service levy renewal on the ballot in May. He suggested that poor economic conditions were partly to blame for the increasing number of social problems faced by the community. The stadium, Campanella argued, would promote economic development and create jobs for county residents. Robert Bond, executive director of the Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Center Associates, stressed the representatives were not interested the politics of the stadium issue, but rather in maintaining the current level of social services (Rutti, 1984b).

On January 19, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Mayor Voinovich sent letters to the County Commissioners requesting their support of his proposed 25% city income tax increase scheduled for the February ballot (Rutti, 1984c). While Commissioners Campanella and Brown noted they would meet with the Mayor in the next week in order to discuss several community issues, Commissioner Hagan said he would not discuss supporting the tax increase until the other commissioners agreed it was necessary to do so. It was reported the county commissioners were slow to pledge support for the Mayor's tax increase as he did

not endorse the domed stadium initiative. Furthermore, the proposed tax increase would apply to out-of-city residents who worked in Cleveland, and thus if the Commissioners were to support the increase, it could potentially strain their relationship with suburban voters (Rutti, 1984c).

In late January, Gordon Gund, local philanthropist and owner of the National Basketball Association (NBA) Cleveland Cavaliers, outlined his reservations regarding the domed stadium initiative (Dolgan, 1984a). While Gund agreed with the idea of the facility in principle, he suggested the proposal might unfairly burden county taxpayers. Gund, who owned Richfield Coliseum – located approximately 30 kilometers from downtown Cleveland – which played host to the NBA Cavaliers, the MISL Spirit, and other events, also expressed concern regarding the potential 25,000-seat basketball configuration proposed for the facility. Gund reported that the Cavaliers were committed to their current suburban home in Richfield, and thus would not play at the domed stadium. Should the proposal be approved, however, the Coliseum could lose a significant number of entertainment events to the newer downtown facility. Interestingly, Commissioner Hagan noted the domed stadium proposal would be a tough sell given the difficult economic conditions faced by many county residents (Dolgan, 1984a). He predicted that if the issue was defeated in May, it would not reappear on the public agenda in the foreseeable future.

The city income tax increase proposed by Mayor Voinovich was the major civic issue on the county-wide February ballot. The issue was debated throughout the community and opposed by several prominent public sector officials,

including Councilmen Jay Westbrook, and Gary Kucinich (Sartin, 1984a). The Mayor argued the tax increase was necessary to balance the city budget ("Tax Hike," 1984). His campaign for the tax increase focused on the potential for social service spending cuts and layoffs –including police, fire, and other emergency services personnel – should the proposal be rejected (Sartin, 1984a). The issue was strongly supported by Council President Forbes (Sartin, 1984b), the *Plain Dealer* ("For Cleveland's Future,"1984), as well as several local unions and civic groups ("Unions, Civic Groups," 1984). The County Commissioners, however, did not endorse the issue. The proposal was defeated at the polls by a margin of 54%-46% (Sartin, 1984c).

On February 13, 1984, despite the mixed reaction to their domed stadium proposal from local public and private sector actors, County Commissioners voted unanimously to place a 25-year, $150 million bond issue on the county-wide ballot scheduled for May 8 (Rutti, 1984d). The proposed bond issue would finance a 72,000-seat domed facility to be built on a 43-acre site in the Central Market district of downtown Cleveland. The Commissioners outlined the proposal would cost the average county homeowner approximately $14 annually until the bond was retired (Rutti, 1984d). Mark Driscoll, the commissioners' internal audit manager, reviewed similar facilities in the U.S., and estimated the domed stadium would generate an annual profit of $3.3 million (Rutti, 1984d). While Driscoll projected luxury suite, concession, and rent revenue based on occupancy of both the NFL Browns and the MLB Indians, the local major-league franchises had yet to make a formal commitment to play at the proposed facility. Meanwhile, the

County Commissioners began to assemble a committee to campaign for the issue (Rutti, 1984d). In order to promote the domed stadium initiative, it was reported that the group would focus on the economic development and civic pride benefits of the facility (Rutti, 1984d).

Later in the month, several community issues were added to the May 8 ballot, further complicating the political dynamics surrounding the Commissioners' domed stadium proposal. On February 23, City Council voted 15-5 to place the failed city income tax increase on the ballot in May (Sartin, 1984d). Council President Forbes supported the move, and outlined that Cleveland's financial position was his priority (Sartin, 1984e). Although Commissioner Campanella argued the stadium and city income tax increase proposals were unrelated (Rutti, 1984e), Forbes and Mayor Voinovich projected that county residents would reject both issues if they were placed on the same ballot (Rutti and Sartin, 1984a). As such, City Council members suggested that county commissioners delay placing the domed stadium initiative on the ballot until November (Rutti, 1984e). Furthermore, on February 23, Council voted 11-9 to cut income tax credits for city residents who also pay income taxes in the suburbs (Sartin, 1984d). Council members noted, however, that the tax credits would be restored if voters approved the proposed city income tax increase in May. Other issues added to the May ballot included 11 Greater Cleveland school district levies, and a county public library levy (Beard, 1984a; Rutti, 1984e).

On February 27, the County Commissioners formally announced a $1 million campaign to promote the domed stadium initiative (Rutti and Sartin, 1984b).

James Foster was chosen to lead the campaign. Previously, Foster had worked promoting local air shows and auto races, as well as in various political campaigns for Commissioner Campanella. He outlined that the domed stadium campaign would include newspaper, radio, and television advertisements, as well as a significant direct mailing component that would reach approximately 400,000 families in the county (Rutti and Sartin, 1984b). Commissioner Virgil Brown said a committee would be formed in order to select the most appropriate site for the proposed facility (Rutti and Sartin, 1984b). However, Commissioner Brown noted the planned 43-acre site in the Central Market district downtown was the most likely location for the project.

The next day, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Mayor Voinovich criticized the use of property taxes to finance the domed stadium proposed by County Commissioners (Rutti and Sartin, 1984b). Instead, the Mayor argued the project should be paid for by those who would use the facility, including residents of other counties. He suggested that, along with contributions from future tenants, Industrial Revenue Bonds – which could be paid for through ticket sales and other revenue generated by the stadium – should be used to raise funds for the facility (Rutti and Sartin, 1984b). In an editorial published on March 1, the *Plain Dealer* rebuked the Mayor for disputing the proposed financing plan for the domed stadium and not presenting a clear alternative ("But Where," 1984). The editorial praised the County Commissioners for their concrete domed stadium plan, and stressed the need for a political consensus to be reached regarding the proposed facility ("But Where," 1984).

In early March, the *Plain Dealer* released the results from a telephone survey of 500 Cuyahoga County registered voters regarding the domed stadium ("Most in Poll," 1984). The survey was conducted in January 1984 by a Detroit-based market research firm, and financed by the Cleveland Growth Association – a local non-profit, private sector economic development group. Interestingly, while the majority of respondents supported the idea of a domed stadium, results indicated they would not approve the bond issue to finance the facility ("Most in Poll," 1984). James Foster, chairman of the committee promoting the domed stadium initiative, stated the survey indicated significant initial support for the financing plan, and argued results would improve once residents were better apprised of the proposal ("Most in Poll," 1984).

On March 14, Mayor Voinovich detailed a preliminary plan for a 55,000-60,000-seat lakefront domed stadium. The Mayor's plan – presented as an alternative to the proposal supported by the County Commissioners – called for Municipal Stadium to be replaced with parkland and other potential developments such as an aquarium and condominiums ("Voinovich Offers," 1984). Voinovich, however, did not detail a specific financing plan for his proposed facility. Commissioner Campanella welcomed the proposal and suggested the Commissioners would consider any plan that included increased employment opportunities for county residents ("Voinovich Offers," 1984).

The next day, the *Plain Dealer* reported the results of a study conducted by Cuyahoga County Regional Planning Commission at the request of the County Commissioners (Rutti, 1984f). The study predicted the facility proposed by the

Commissioners would result in the construction of three 500-room hotels, five high quality restaurants, and an office tower in Cleveland within 10 years of construction. The results also indicated the facility would create 3,723 construction jobs, and 6,821 permanent jobs, as well as generate $3 million in municipal income tax and $3 million in property tax annually (Rutti, 1984f). A separate study conducted by the Cleveland Growth Association found the facility would generate a $62 million economic impact for the City, including approximately $10 million from out-of-county residents (Rutti, 1984f). In order to forecast the potential economic impacts of the proposed domed stadium, both studies used information from other communities that had built similar facilities and assumed the dome would be constructed in the downtown Central Market district site.

While the construction site was a point of contention surrounding the domed stadium proposal, the major issue of debate centered on the way in which the facility would be financed ("Take Stadium Off," 1984; Rutti, 1984g). On March 25, State Representative Mary Boyle and James Foster, chairman of the domed stadium promotion committee, debated the stadium issue at a suburban community council meeting (Rutti, 1984g). Boyle, a political ally of Governor Celeste, stated that while she did not oppose the proposed facility, she would not support the property tax financing mechanism advanced by the County Commissioners. Foster argued that the dome would act as a catalyst for economic development, and revealed that two hotel developers expressed a commitment to build near the proposed facility (Rutti, 1984g). Boyle, however, outlined that the

report prepared by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission found limited economic development generated by a similar facility built in Seattle. Furthermore she questioned both the overall cost of the facility, and noted there were no controls in place to prevent potential construction cost over-runs in the proposal (Rutti, 1984g). In February, Boyle announced that she would run against Commissioner Campanella in the November election ('State Rep. Boyle," 1984). As such, her opposition to the project was characterized as politically motivated ("Politics Enters Fight," 1984).

On March 30, Mayor Voinovich and the County Commissioners reached an agreement regarding the domed stadium issue (Sartin, 1984f). The local officials signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding that outlined several significant alterations to the original proposal. The agreement stated that property taxes would only be used to finance half the cost of the project – approximately $75 million. It was reported that the remaining funds would be raised through the sale of luxury seating, concession contracts, a food and beverage tax, and support from the local private sector (Sartin, 1984f). Furthermore, the officials agreed to suspend plans for a retractable dome and planned to study other potential site options for the facility. The agreement also stipulated that lease contracts must be negotiated with potential future tenants prior to the sale of bonds (Sartin, 1984f). With the revisions to the proposal, the Mayor pledged support for the domed stadium issue and the County Commissioners endorsed the city income tax increase scheduled for the county-wide May ballot. The local officials said they would request that state funds allocated to the CSU arena and convention center

be used to help finance the domed stadium (Sartin, 1984f). Governor Celeste, however, declined to support the plan.

In early April, Governor Celeste announced his support of the domed stadium, but continued to criticize the proposed financing plan advanced by the County Commissioners. On April 4, the *Plain Dealer* reported that while Celeste supported the idea of the domed stadium, he believed the issue would fail at the polls in May due to the property tax increase proposed to finance the facility (Rutti, 1984h). Commissioner Campanella, however, argued the burden on taxpayers would be reduced if the Governor agreed to contribute state funds to the project (Rutti, 1984h). Celeste did not commit to offering state funds for the project, but suggested he was working on alternative plans to build a domed stadium in Cleveland.

On April 8, the *Plain Dealer* published a series of articles that examined various aspects of the domed stadium issue (Clark, 1984a). The series – which ran until April 10 – included commentary and analysis from both proponents and opponents of the proposal, and presented information gathered from other cities where similar facilities were constructed. Proponents of the domed stadium continued to argue the facility would act as a catalyst generating significant economic development. Furthermore, supporters stressed the domed stadium would also produce important intangible benefits including improved community pride and civic image. Building the facility, they argued, would send a positive signal to the nation, and position Cleveland as progressive city moving forward (Talbott, 1984a). The *Plain Dealer*, however, reported a varied record of

economic development resulting from stadium development in other U.S. cities. While stadiums constructed in Cincinnati, Houston, New Orleans reportedly stimulated economic growth, facilities constructed in Minneapolis, Seattle, and Pontiac did not lead to significant development (Talbot, 1984b). James Kastelic and Thomas Baselia, authors of the Cuyahoga County Regional Planning Commission report on the domed stadium issue, suggested facilities that were constructed closer to the downtown core had a greater ability to encourage spin-off development (Talbott, 1984a). Interestingly, the newspaper reported that all domed facilities investigated required some level of public subsidization for construction and, in some cases, operating expenses (Clark, 1984a). The domed stadium series also outlined the various political actors engaged in the debate, and some reporters questioned whether the facility could be built within the proposed $150 million budget outlined by the County Commissioners (Clark, 1984b; Clark 1984c).

While proponents of the domed stadium maintained the facility would promote economic revitalization, opponents continued to dispute the use of property taxes to fund the project. Vocal opponent, State Representative Mary Boyle, suggested the financing mechanism proposed by the Commissioners would restrict the ability of the County to issue bonds in order to complete maintenance scheduled to repair deteriorating roads and bridges (Clark, 1984d). Boyle argued the road and bridge improvement project was more important than the proposed domed stadium, and also pointed to other pressing civic priorities including the need for a new county jail (Clark, 1984d). The arguments advanced by State

Representative Boyle were reiterated by other individuals concerned with the existing state of county infrastructure (Clint, 1984). Furthermore, On April 19, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Boyle formed a group to campaign against the domed stadium proposal (Rutti and Clark, 1984). The group included State Representatives, Louis Stokes and Ike Thompson, as well as Parma[1] Mayor, John Petruska. The politicians rejected the use of property taxes to finance the proposed facility, and argued essential community needs should take priority over the domed stadium initiative (Rutti and Clark, 1984).

On April 20, real estate developer, John Galbreath, held a press conference at Burke Lakefront Airport in Cleveland to announce his support for the domed stadium initiative (Rutti, 1984i). During the press conference, Galbreath endorsed the Central Market site proposed by the commissioners, and promised to build an estimated $80 million Hyatt hotel in downtown Cleveland if county voters approved the proposal. He presented two hotels he had recently constructed in Columbus to serve as examples for potential development in Cleveland, and argued that the hotel could help revitalize the city (Rutti, 1984i). While Galbreath was well known for his real estate developments in Columbus, his record of development in Cleveland was reportedly tenuous. In 1961, he signed a development contract with Cleveland to lead the downtown Erieview development project. Although Galbreath completed the 40-story Erieview Plaza in 1964, several other locations remained undeveloped resulting in threats from local politicians to terminate his contract on several occasions. Galbreath eventually sold the land in 1979, as he was unable to find a client for the site

[1] Parma is a suburb of Cleveland located in Cuyahoga County.

(Rutti, 1984i). Galbreath's tarnished development record in Cleveland cast doubt on his ability to fulfill his promise to build a hotel in the city if the proposed facility was approved.

The domed stadium issue was further supported by two stadium managers during a presentation at the Cleveland City Club – a traditional forum for local debate. During the presentation, Jerry Bell, executive director of the Minneapolis Metrodome, and Cliff Wallace, general manager of the New Orleans Superdome, detailed their stadium development experience, and predicted the construction of a similar facility in Cleveland would generate economic development (Stainer, 1984). Along with securing long-term leases with the local MLB and NFL franchises, Bell outlined that the Metrodome also hosts University of Minnesota football games that draw out-of-state visitors to the area. Wallace pointed to a planned $350 million commercial development near the Superdome as evidence the facility has attracted investment to the region, and suggested Cleveland bid for the NFL Super Bowl game if the proposed facility was approved (Stainer, 1984). Domed stadium opponents criticized the City Club for not presenting both sides of the issue during the forum. Alan Davis, Chairman of the City Club, however, noted that the City Club was interested in holding a debate regarding the domed stadium proposal but Commissioner Campanella refused to take part (Stainer, 1984).

The domed stadium proposal also received significant support from the *Plain Dealer*. The local newspaper published several editorials that strongly endorsed the issue leading up to the May 8 election ("Vote For," 1984; "The Stadium,"

1984; "The University," 1984; "Help the City," 1984). In the editorials, the newspaper acknowledged that while the local community faced serious economic difficulties, the proposed domed stadium would generate significant economic development and improve the image of downtown Cleveland ("Vote For," 1984). Such development, it was argued, would allow public officials to better address the pressing social problems faced by county residents ("The Stadium," 1984). Consequently, the *Plain Dealer* criticized opponents – especially Governor Celeste – for not supporting the domed stadium proposal ("Vote For," 1984; "The University," 1984). Interestingly, while the local newspaper admitted that some claims of economic revitalization made by supporters were exaggerated ("The Stadium," 1984), even vocal opponents of the issue recognized the need for a new facility ("Vote For," 1984).

Results of the CSU domed stadium study were released on April 25 (Rutti and Farkas, 1984). The study was conducted by Laventhol & Horwath, a local certified public accounting firm, in order to examine the feasibility of a joint-use facility with the capacity to host both CSU events and major-league baseball. The study projected a 45,000-seat domed stadium would cost approximately $128 million, while a smaller 10,000-seat facility would cost approximately $39.3 million. The study estimated a 72,000-seat domed stadium would cost approximately $200 million – $50 million more than estimates outlined in the County Commissioners' plan (Rutti and Farkas, 1984). Furthermore, the study suggested that CSU would be best served by a smaller facility located close to or on campus. While the study did not detail possible financing options, results

indicated that neither facility would operate profitably (Rutti and Farkas, 1984). Thus, Commissioner Campanella argued the study confirmed that the domed stadium proposal presented by the County Commissioners was the only feasible option. The *Plain Dealer* reported that a Governor Celeste aide said the CSU study presented a less expensive stadium option, and noted the Governor was exploring several alternative financing plans (Rutti and Farkas, 1984).

In weeks leading up to the May 8 election, Governor Celeste remained a vocal opponent of the domed stadium proposal. On May 3, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Celeste sent a letter to MLB Commissioner Bowie Kuhn outlining that while he expected the issue to fail at the polls due to the financing method proposed, he supported the idea of building a domed stadium in Cleveland (Diemer, 1984). Governor Celeste reiterated this message in a letter to the editor published in the *Plain Dealer* on May 4, and argued the proposed property tax financing plan was both unfair and wrong (Celeste, 1984). In the letter to the editor, Celeste stated that Commissioner Campanella refused to join efforts to examine the feasibility of a developing a domed stadium in conjunction with CSU, and noted that he lobbied the County Commissioners to delay placing the issue on the ballot until a consensus could reached regarding the financing method. Celeste also criticized domed stadium supporters for contracting out-of-state firms to promote the issue. Furthermore, Governor Celeste described the domed stadium issue as a referendum to determine the appropriateness of using property taxes to finance the proposed facility (Celeste, 1984). The Governor was joined by eight city councilors who issued a statement that outlined they supported the idea of

building a domed stadium, but opposed the method of financing proposed by the County Commissioners ("County Mayors," 1984).

Despite the vocal opposition advanced by Governor Celeste and several other prominent political actors, domed stadium proponents continued to draw support from local community groups, including: The Cleveland Building and Trade Council, the Cuyahoga County City Managers Association, and the Citizens League of Greater Cleveland (Rutti and Clark, 1984; "County Mayors," 1984; "Building Trades," 1984). Furthermore, 15 minority-owned firms pledged to support the issue after assurances from the County Commissioners that minority-owned businesses would receive a fair allocation of construction and professional service related contracts at the proposed facility ("Building Trades," 1984). A day before the May 8 vote, Commissioner Campanella attended a press conference in downtown Cleveland with entertainment promoter, Don King (Ricks, 1984). During the press conference, King predicted that the issue would be successful at the polls, and hinted that several big name acts – including Michael Jackson – might be interested in performing at the proposed facility.

The Result

On May 8, 1984, Cuyahoga County voters rejected the domed stadium proposal by a margin of 65.3% – 34.7% (Clark, 1984e). The city income tax increase proposed by Mayor Voinovich was also defeated at the polls by a similar margin, while county voters approved 10 of 15 school levies, and a five year operating levy for the public library system (Sartin, 1984; Beard, 1984b). Several political actors suggested that the issue failed due to the financing method

proposed for the facility. Governor Celeste reiterated his position that county voters rejected an increase in property taxes, not necessarily the idea of a domed stadium, and Mayor Voinovich indicated that a more equitable financing plan could be developed (Clark, 1984e). Art Modell, however, asserted that the proposal was defeated as local civic actors were unable to develop a consensus regarding the project. Despite the negative election results, several public officials including Governor Celeste, Mayor Voinovich, and Commissioner Campanella outlined that they would continue to develop plans to build a domed stadium in Cleveland (Clark, 1984e; Sartin, 1984h; Rice, 1984b).

The *Plain Dealer* reported that the committee formed to support the domed stadium initiative spent $691,000 to promote the issue ("Dome Group," 1984). The group received numerous donations from prominent local private sector sources, including: architectural, law, and accounting firms, construction, real estate, and utility companies, and a local bank, among others. The largest contributions were reportedly made by the Cleveland Growth Association, Art Modell, and Forest City Enterprises, a local real estate development company, with donations of $246,000, $50,000, and $30,000, respectively ("Dome Group," 1984; Rice, 1984c). John Galbreath – who promised to build a hotel downtown if the proposed facility was approved – contributed $5,000 to support the issue. Advertising and market research were listed as the major expenses for the campaign to promote the domed stadium. The committee paid a Virginia-based firm $200,000 to subcontract media advertising, and a Detroit-based market research firm was paid $53,000 to conduct phone surveys. In contrast, the

newspaper outlined that the opposition group formed by local political actors raised only $6,989 to defeat the proposal ("Dome Group," 1984).

After the election, community attention shifted from the failed domed stadium proposal to other civic issues, including the pending sale of the local MLB franchise. While David LeFevre reached an agreement to purchase control of the Indians from the O'Neill Foundation for $16.5 million in June, he withdrew his offer five months later due to litigation launched by several minority shareholders attempting to block the transaction (Schneider, 1984). Also, Mary Boyle defeated incumbent Vincent Campanella for a County Commissioner post in the November election (Rutti, 1984j). Boyle, a vocal opponent of the domed stadium proposal, was endorsed by both Governor Celeste and the *Plain Dealer* ("PD Ballot Recommendations," 1984). After the vote, Campanella suggested that his leadership role in the failed domed stadium initiative might have negatively impacted his campaign for re-election (Rutti, 1984j).

In December 1984, the *Plain Dealer* warned that authorities in New Jersey were interested in acquiring a MLB franchise, and suggested the Indians could be a target for potential relocation ("About That Stadium," 1984). The newspaper argued that losing the Indians would damage the local economy and civic image, and pressed Governor Celeste to take action and renew efforts to build a domed stadium in Cleveland in order to ensure the community would be able to retain the MLB franchise ("About That Stadium," 1984).

APPENDIX B

Case Study 2 – The Gateway Project (1990)

On August 2, 1989, Richard Jacobs, owner of the Cleveland Indians and local real estate entrepreneur, held a press conference to announce that he was seeking a new facility for his Major League Baseball (MLB) franchise. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reported that Jacobs intended to develop a natural turf, open-air stadium in the Central Market district of downtown Cleveland (Kissling, 1989a). In order to do so, he planned to work with New Stadium Corporation (NSC), an entity created and financed by the local private sector following the landslide defeat of the domed stadium initiative in 1984. NSC acquired parcels of downtown property and coordinated efforts to advance a stadium development agenda in Cleveland.

During the press conference, Jacobs presented preliminary designs for a proposed 44,000-seat baseball-specific facility (Kissling, 1989a). The proposed stadium would provide the Indians with a more intimate setting than their existing 78,000-seat lakefront home, Municipal Stadium, which they had shared with the AAFL/NFL Cleveland Browns since 1947. The plans for the new ballpark detailed a possible expansion to include an additional 28,000 retractable seats for football, which would allow the facility to accommodate the Cleveland Browns. Without the football expansion option, the estimated cost of the project was reported to be $150 million (Kissling, 1989a). Jacobs, however, noted that he was not interested in personally financing the new facility. New Stadium Corporation chairman, Frank Mosier, proposed that the public contribute approximately $120

million to the project, with the remaining $30 million to be raised from various local corporate concerns, and through the sale of loges and club seating at the new facility (Kissling, 1989a). Mosier urged city, county, and state officials to develop a creative plan to finance the proposed stadium development.

The project faced two significant financing deadlines (Kissling, 1989a). First, New Stadium Corporation had $24.2 million in mortgage debt due on December 23, 1989. Local banks loaned the group $18 million and the state advanced $4 million – the residual $2.2 million represented accrued interest – which New Stadium Corporation used to purchase land for a potential stadium development in the Central Market district. The loans were originally due in June, but were extended for six months due to perceived progress with the project. Second, a special exemption in the federal tax code, which would allow New Stadium Corporation to issue tax-free bonds, was to expire on December 31, 1990. These deadlines created a sense of urgency; Mosier pushed for quick action, and suggested that placing the issue on a public ballot might jeopardize the project (Kissling, 1989a).

Initially, the announcement of the proposed publicly subsidized stadium was met with mixed reaction from local political actors (Delater, 1989). Ohio Governor, Richard Celeste, noted the announcement represented a positive step for stadium development, but declined to comment further until more details were made available. Similarly, Cleveland Mayor, George Voinovich, declined to comment extensively on the project until he was better apprised of the specific details. While Cleveland State Senator, Michael White, supported the idea of a

new downtown stadium, he urged the local private sector to take a leadership role in the project moving forward (Luttner, 1989). Art Modell, owner of the NFL Cleveland Browns and managing tenant of Municipal Stadium, was reportedly out of the country at the time of the announcement and was not available for immediate comment.

County Commissioners Mary Boyle and Timothy Hagan initially voiced the loudest political opposition to the project (Delater, 1989). The commissioners rejected the idea of raising county sales or property taxes in order to finance a new sports facility, noting they were committed to supporting initiatives which would address other community priorities, including a health and human services levy, as well as a bond issue to support a $62 million addition to the county jail. Furthermore, Hagan argued that a new publicly funded stadium was not a pressing community priority. Commissioner Virgil Brown said that he did not believe public opinion had changed significantly since county voters rejected the 1984 domed stadium proposal, and dismissed the idea of implementing a tax without a public vote on this issue (Kissling, 1989b).

City Council president, George Forbes, voiced his support for the proposed stadium development in a front-page article that appeared in the *Plain Dealer* on August 4, 1989. In the article, Forbes defined the proposed stadium development as a county project, and said that he feared the Indians might relocate if a new facility was not built (Luttner, 1989). Forbes argued that the Indians faced a significant disadvantage in attracting players to play in Municipal Stadium due to its large size and advanced age. While Forbes admitted that he had not spoken to

the Indians owner regarding potential franchise relocation, Jacobs revealed that he was approached by several other cities with offers to build a new stadium but refused to name the cities involved. Furthermore, Jacobs noted that he would be patient with the stadium development process, and stated the announcement regarding the proposed new facility should not be construed as a demand or a threat (Luttner, 1989).

The *Plain Dealer* also supported the stadium proposal presented by Indians owner, Richard Jacobs. In an editorial published on August 4, the local newspaper briefly outlined the history of MLB in Cleveland, and hinted that other cities with major-league aspirations remained interested in acquiring – and re-locating – the Indians ("Political Will," 1989). In the editorial, the *Plain Dealer* argued that the proposed facility could revitalize downtown Cleveland, and stressed that political leadership was needed to move the stadium issue forward. The local newspaper criticized both Governor Celeste and Mayor Voinovich for not taking a more prominent role in the matter, and suggested that local civic actors should work together in order to negotiate an agreement regarding the proposed facility ("Political Will," 1989). On August 6, *Plain Dealer* editor, Thomas Vail, wrote an article in support of the proposed stadium development (Vail, 1989). In the article, Vail noted several deadlines regarding the stadium project, and outlined that most new major-league facilities were built with public funds, often without public approval. He pressed for leadership from local politicians, and patience from local private sector actors, and noted the facility could act as a catalyst generating significant economic development for the region. Such development,

he argued, would allow the community to increase funding for other pressing civic priorities such as police, fire, and garbage removal services (Vail, 1989). Furthermore, Vail suggested that if the stadium issue failed, Cleveland could risk losing the Indians, as well as significant civic status (Vail, 1989).

While the *Plain Dealer's* initial editorial position regarding the stadium issue was supportive, the local newspaper also published reports of opposition to the proposed facility. For example, Cleveland resident, Greg Cielec, wrote an article that disputed the appropriateness of using public funds to finance the stadium development (Cielec, 1989). In the article, Cielec proclaimed that Cleveland residents would not pay for a new stadium, and suggested Richard Jacobs was selfish for asking local taxpayers to subsidize the proposed facility given other important civic needs facing the community, such as health and human services programming, and a new county jail (Cielec, 1989). He argued that the Central Market site proposed for the new stadium would not provide adequate parking, and thus would result in traffic congestion during games. As such, Cielec declared that the lakefront location of Municipal Stadium was best suited to anchor community revitalization moving forward. The *Plain Dealer* also printed letters to the editor regarding the proposed facility – most of which initially did not support the plan. On August 13, the local newspaper published a full page of letters written by 19 county residents opposed to the stadium proposal ("Read Their Letters," 1989). The majority of letters indicated that the residents rejected the use of large public subsidies to fund the proposed stadium development, and noted

that other civic issues should take priority over the stadium issue ("Read Their Letters," 1989).

On August 16, Art Modell held a press conference at Municipal Stadium to announce an $80 million plan to renovate the lakefront facility (Kissling, 1989c). From a platform standing on second base, Modell outlined plans developed by architect Ronald J. Labinski that were drawn up at the request of Mayor Voinovich earlier in the year in order to gauge the feasibility of modernizing the 58 year old facility. During the press conference, Modell presented the renovation plan as a less expensive alternative to the new stadium proposed by Indians owner, Richard Jacobs. The planned renovation would be completed in approximately 2.5 years with construction scheduled around the MLB and NFL seasons. Jacobs opposed the Municipal Stadium renovation plan as he said the facility was too large for baseball, a flaw which, he argued, was an issue that could not be addressed through renovations (Kissling, 1989a). While Modell noted that his renovation plan was not a demand, he clearly outlined that he was not interested in relocating the Browns to the new downtown facility proposed by Jacobs (Kissling, 1989b).

On August 20, The *Plain Dealer* released the results of a poll regarding the proposed new stadium to be developed in the Central Market district. While the newspaper noted that the poll was not conducted scientifically, the results indicated a significant negative public sentiment regarding the proposed stadium project (Guenther, 1989). The majority of respondents indicated that they did not believe Cleveland needed a new baseball stadium, and reported they would not

support a $30 annual tax increase to build a new facility. Furthermore, most respondents voted that they would be willing to lose the Indians in order to avoid a tax increase, and called upon the private sector – especially the team owners – to finance the proposed stadium (Guenther, 1989).

In an attempt to develop a consensus on the stadium issue within the local public sector, Mayor Voinovich planned a meeting on August 28 to bring political leaders together in order to discuss the plans presented by Jacobs and Modell ("Voinovich Calls,"1989). Voinovich invited Governor Celeste, Commissioners Boyle, Brown, and Hagan, Council president Forbes, and area representatives from the state legislature. Owners of the two local major league franchises, however, were not invited. The meeting did not materialize and was later postponed indefinitely due to various scheduling conflicts and the reluctance of some members to attend ("Mayor Postpones," 1989). Although Governor Celeste would not commit to the August meeting proposed by Mayor Voinovich, he appointed Thomas Chema, a prominent local attorney and former chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, to work behind the scenes in order to develop consensus for stadium development among the local government and civic leaders (Kissling, 1989d).

In early September, the *Plain Dealer* published two articles written by Lake Forest College professors, Robert Baade and Richard Dye, regarding the economics of stadium development (Baade and Dye, 1989a, b). In the articles, Baade and Dye noted that publicly subsidized stadium construction initiatives were often motivated by the desire of public officials to stimulate economic

development, and satisfy major-league franchise owners searching to generate new revenue streams from improved facility amenities such as luxury seating (Baade and Dye, 1989a). The authors revealed their research indicated that stadiums do not act as catalysts generating significant economic development, and outlined that team owners hold considerable bargaining leverage over public officials in stadium subsidy negotiations due to the monopolistic nature of the major-leagues, and the potential threat of franchise re-location (Baade and Dye, 1989a). Despite their inability to produce significant economic benefits, Baade and Dye argued that professional sports can impact the image of a community, and suggested that stadium projects should be integrated within a balanced development initiative, including both residential and commercial components (Baade and Dye, 1989b).

Following the initial discussion surrounding the stadium proposals presented by Jacobs and Modell, the Cleveland mayoral election dominated local newspaper coverage leading up to the November 7 ballot. The race for mayor was highly contested, with several prominent local political actors vying for the position, including: Cleveland Municipal Court Clerk, Benny Bonanno; City Council President, George Forbes; Cuyahoga County Commissioner, Tim Hagan; and, State Representative, Michael White. Both Bonanno and Hagan were defeated in earlier primaries, setting the stage for a run-off between White and Forbes. In the election, Michael White defeated George Forbes, by a margin of 56%–44% (Becker, 1989a). White was considered an underdog of sorts, as Forbes had a significantly larger campaign budget, and won endorsements from several

prominent local political, private sector, and organized labour actors (Becker, 1989a). Furthermore, Forbes had a long – although at times tumultuous – history in Cleveland politics. During his campaign, White stressed he was interested in attending to public rather than private interests, and hoped to lead an era of cooperation rather than confrontation (Becker, 1989a). Neither candidate, however, emphasized the potential stadium development during the mayoral race.

Interestingly, White won 81% of the vote in predominately white wards, but collected only 31% of the vote in predominately black wards (Becker, 1989b). Councilman Jay Westbrook was later appointed to succeed George Forbes as City Council President (Russell, 1990). Also on November 7, Cuyahoga County voters approved a health and human service levy, as well as a bond issue to build an addition to the county jail (Torassa and Thoma, 1989). The health and human service levy was to generate $51 million annually in order to fund mental health and drug abuse initiatives, while the jail issue would raise $62 million to finance a 480-bed expansion of the 885-bed facility that county commissioners argued was chronically overcrowded (Torassa and Thoma, 1989). This would insure that any potential stadium issue would not compete with a health and human service or stadium construction initiative.

In late 1989, Thomas Chema continued to work with civic leaders in Cleveland to advance the stadium agenda. Local public officials generally agreed that any facility built should be publicly owned, but they could not agree on a specific method of financing for the project. Chema held meetings with numerous city, county and state officials to review various options for the stadium

development. During the meetings, it was reported that leaders discussed the creation of a sports authority to guide the project, and several possible financing methods (DeLater and Kissling, 1990a). Chema was able to move the stadium agenda forward, and secure private sector cooperation for the project. For example, on December 23, the *Plain Dealer* reported that local banks would not take action to recover the $24.2 million in mortgage debt owed by New Stadium Corporation in order to avoid disrupting the stadium development progress (Kissling, 1989e).

Early in 1990, Chema presented a financing plan outline for the proposed new stadium. The plan was based on a $160 million facility, and called for the private sector to fund 50% of the projected cost (Kissling, 1990a). This significantly reduced the taxpayer burden relative to the plan presented by Indians owner Richard Jacobs and New Stadium Corporation, which called for the public to finance 80% of the proposed facility cost. In the financing plan presented by Chema, the private sector contribution would be generated by selling premium seating, exclusive sales rights, and naming rights at the facility, as well as from corporate sponsorships and team lease agreements. The public sector contribution would be generated by a 'sin tax' levy applied to liquor, beer, and wine sold within the county, an admissions tax, as well as an annual county subsidy (Kissling, 1990a). Chema estimated the taxes could raise approximately $16 million per year. In order to implement a sin tax to finance the proposed facility, county officials would require both a change in state law and public approval to allow such taxes to fund stadium construction. The facility would be publicly

owned by a county authority and would represent only a component of the redevelopment to take place within the Central Market district. While Chema noted that public officials had not approved the financing plan he presented, the proposal was to be discussed during a meeting called by Governor Celeste scheduled for mid-January (Kissling, 1990a).

County Commissioner Timothy Hagan voiced initial opposition for the financing plan, arguing the proposed sin tax would disproportionately burden lower-income residents. Hagan also argued that, as studies have reported declining consumption of cigarettes and alcohol by middle- and upper-income individuals, the sin tax would not provide the stable source of future revenue that would be required in order to support a potential bond issue (Kissling, 1990a). Instead, Hagan argued, a temporary increase in the county sales tax could raise the requisite funds to finance the proposed stadium development. The *Plain Dealer* reported that other civic actors, including Mayor White, Council President Westbrook, as well as County Commissioners Boyle and Brown did not comment extensively on the proposed financing plan presented by Chema (Kissling 1990a).

On January 19, 1990, Governor Richard Celeste held a meeting with Cleveland politicians in order to discuss various issues surrounding the proposed stadium development (Kissling, 1990b). The local officials who attended the meeting included, State Representative Patrick Sweeney, County Commissioners Boyle, Brown, and Hagan, Mayor White, Council President Westbrook, and aide Chema. While no decisions were made regarding the development or financing of the proposed stadium, Governor Celeste requested that State Representative

Sweeney begin drafting changes in state legislation that would enable a sin tax to finance a portion of the facility (Kissling, 1990b). This financing measure, however, would have to be approved both the state legislature and county residents. Chema and Mayor White agreed that the project should leverage the proposed stadium development into a broader downtown redevelopment initiative that would create jobs. The leaders agreed to meet again in 10 days to discuss the project in more detail.

Cleveland and Cuyahoga County leaders reached a consensus concerning the method of financing for the proposed new stadium after the second meeting with Governor Celeste on January 29 (Kissling, 1990c). The government leaders agreed to pursue the sin tax financing option to fund the project, which was expanded to include an $80 million indoor arena, as well as an estimated $20-40 million in surrounding commercial development. The estimated cost of the expanded development was $260 million to be evenly split between public and private sectors. Governor Celeste pointed out that the addition of the arena could potentially lure the NBA Cavaliers to the downtown development from their suburban home in Richfield – approximately 25 miles from downtown Cleveland – where they played since 1974.

While local civic officials were in agreement regarding the sin tax method of financing, they could not agree on who should control the project (Kissling, 1990c). Commissioners Brown and Hagan argued that, because the county would be responsible for funding the project, it should control the stadium development authority. Mayor White and Council President Westbrook, however, insisted that

the city should be an equal partner in managing the process as the city owned a portion of the development site, and Cleveland residents would contribute to the project financing. Both Hagan and White, however, noted they would be willing to work together to find a solution acceptable to both parties.

In order to settle the dispute over project control, Governor Celeste hired professional mediator, Eric Van Loon, in an attempt to broker a deal between city and county officials (DeLater, 1990a). Van Loon held separate discussions with Mayor White, Council President Westbrook, the County Commissioners and Thomas Chema to discuss various options regarding the composition and control of the stadium development authority. On March 1, the *Plain Dealer* reported that local officials reached an agreement for a seven member governing board that would see the city and county select three members each, with the final member to be chosen by the county, subject to city approval (DeLater, 1990b).

The next day, stadium consultant, Sam Katz, presented a revised estimate of the project development cost (DeLater and Kissling, 1990b). Katz estimated that the overall cost for the development was $350 million, including the stadium, arena, parking facilities and surrounding land acquisition for commercial development. This new estimate represented a $70 million increase in project cost from previous projections, and required an additional $4 million from Cuyahoga county taxpayers per year. Furthermore, Katz argued that it was unrealistic for the private sector to be responsible for more than 35-40% of the projected cost. In contrast, previous plans projected a 50% contribution from the local private sector. County Commissioners had significant reservations regarding the revised

financing estimate presented by Katz, but maintained a willingness to discuss the issue further. Governor Celeste noted that the stadium development was a complex issue and would require time to develop an appropriate financing plan.

After a meeting with Mayor White, Commissioner Hagan outlined that he would agree to place the sin tax on the upcoming ballot – scheduled for May 8, 1990 – if three conditions were satisfied (DeLater, 1990c). First, the Indians would have to increase their financial contribution to the project and commit to a long-term lease. Second, a financing plan acceptable to the commissioners would have to be developed. Third, the local private sector would have to increase their financial contribution. Public officials continued to work behind the scenes in order to move the project forward. While Katz was reportedly looking into various financing options, White and Hagan sent representatives to meet with Jacobs in order to begin negotiations regarding a potential lease agreement for the stadium (DeLater, 1990c). Meanwhile, Richard Shatten, executive director of Cleveland Tomorrow – a non-profit advocacy organization representing the local private sector – actively pursued increased support for the project from local corporations.

On March 11, The *Plain Dealer* reported that Indians owners, Richard and David Jacobs, agreed to sign a 20-year lease to play in the new stadium. Furthermore, Cleveland Tomorrow executive director, Richard Shatten, noted that the local private sector was committed to increasing their investment in the project. It was also speculated that the Gunds had agreed to commit their NBA franchise to a long-term lease to play in the proposed area (Lawless, 1990). As

such, County Commissioners committed to place the sin tax issue on the upcoming ballot scheduled for May 8, pending approval of the Ohio Legislature. Officials projected that the county sin tax – applied to beer, wine, liquor and cigarettes for 15 years – would represent the 50% public share of the proposed development. The tax was projected to increase the cost cigarettes by 4.5 cents per pack, liquor by 1.5 cents per glass, and wine and beer by 1.25 cents per glass. After a delay caused by alcohol and tobacco lobbyists, the sin tax financing measure was approved by the State Legislature on March 20, with an emergency clause that converted the bill into law immediately (Becker, 1990).

With the sin tax officially placed on the May 8 ballot, Mayor White and Commissioner Hagan began selling the issue they would label as the Gateway Economic Development Project (DeLater, 1990d). On March 28, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Former county budget director, Dennis Roche, volunteered to manage the campaign, and former city finance director, William Reidy, would serve as treasurer. Roche and Reidy led a successful campaign for the county health and human services levy in 1984 (DeLater, 1990d). Media consultant David Axelrod was named to direct campaign advertising efforts, and marketing consultant Tom Andrzejewski volunteered to manage public relations. Both Axelrod and Andrzejewski worked on Mayor White's mayoral campaign in 1989. While Roche suggested that the project theme would stress job creation and redevelopment, Hagan argued that selling the issue would not be an easy task as the sin tax shared the May 8 ballot with a seven-year operating levy for Cuyahoga

Community College, as well as 28 other community tax and bond issues (DeLater, 1990d; Kissling, 1990d).

In early April, Gateway Project proponents faced opposition from several community actors. On April 4, stadium development point man, Thomas Chema, debated newsletter publisher and community activist, Roldo Bartimole, on the merits of the proposed project at the City Club of Cleveland – a traditional forum for public debate (DeLater, 1990e). While Chema suggested the development should be viewed as a civic investment, Bartimole argued against the public subsidization of private enterprise, and advanced the proposed sin tax financing mechanism would unfairly burden disadvantaged members of the community (Delater, 1990e). During the debate, Bartimole bemoaned the lack of transparency surrounding details of the project, and suggested that the attempt to lure the NBA Cavaliers downtown was a ruse to entice black voters to support the development – a charge that Chema and representatives from the local black community denied (DeLater, 1990e).

On April 5, Warren Davis, a United Auto Workers (UAW) regional director, created a group titled: Citizens Against Stadium Taxes (Kissling, 1989e). The group was formed after a unanimous decision by local UAW leaders to oppose the sin tax proposal. Davis stated that the union – a long-time opponent of tax abatement – was against the public subsidization of private profit, and accused local politicians of attempting to hide what amounted to a regressive tax increase (Kissling, 1990e). Furthermore, Davis argued that Jacobs would not relocate the franchise given his significant real estate holdings in the area. The *Plain Dealer*

reported that Gateway spokesman, Thomas Andrzejewski, was surprised that the UAW was opposed to the Gateway Project as it would generate tax revenue for the county and would not be financed through tax abatements (Kissling, 1990e). In early May, the Robert Nece, chairman of the UAW Community Action Program Council, would present an alternative stadium development plan (DeLater, 1990f). Designed by a local architect, the plans called for an arena, office tower and hotel to be attached to Municipal Stadium. The estimated cost of the project was reported to be $275 million, and would be financed almost entirely by the private sector. Shari Weir, director of the Ohio Citizen Action consumer group, joined the UAW in opposition to the proposed sin tax as she argued existing community needs were not being satisfied (Kissling, 1990e).

Along with Bartimole, the UAW, and other community activists, the *Plain Dealer* also reported that county business owners involved in liquor sales might form further opposition to the proposed sin tax (Freeh, 1990). These merchants were reported to be worried about price conscious consumers taking their business out of the county in order to avoid the increased tax. While Chema noted that the price increase resulting from the sin tax would be minor, local liquor merchants argued that consumers would be wary of any price increase. Retail analysts suggested that the increased tax would affect inner-city businesses less than those closer to county borders due to the captive nature of the inner-city consumer base (Freeh, 1990). Indeed, the *Plain Dealer* later reported that representatives from several large alcohol and tobacco producers, including Anheuser-Busch, Miller Brewing, and the Tobacco Institute, had raised $350,000

in order to campaign against the proposed sin tax (DeLater, 1990g). Commissioner Hagan, however, argued the tobacco and liquor companies were non-local, profit-oriented actors, motivated by self-interest (DeLater, 1990g).

Congressional State Representatives, Louis Stokes and Mary Oakar, also voiced significant political opposition to the Gateway Project. Stokes and his grassroots political organization – the 21st Congressional District Caucus – argued that the proposed sin tax would unfairly burden inner-city taxpayers who were least able to afford such an increase (Luttner and Kissling, 1990). Furthermore, Stokes noted that residents from adjoining counties and other states would be able to enjoy the facilities without contributing to the financing. Oakar suggested that the issue should be removed from the May 8 ballot due to the many lingering questions surrounding the proposed development (Luttner, 1990). While Oakar did not press voters to reject the sin tax, she questioned several project details, including the development site, and possible tenant for the arena, as well as the underlying need for a new baseball stadium in the city. Interestingly, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Oakar left the door open to support the project in the future (Luttner, 1990a).

Despite opposition to the project, public officials continued to garner support from various community groups. On April 11, AFL – CIO, the largest organized union in the county, voted unanimously to endorse the proposed stadium development (Luttner and Livingston, 1990). Union leaders stressed that the jobs created by the project would aid union workers and inner-city residents. Furthermore, Commissioner Hagan announced that should the proposed stadium

development be approved, local political actors would ensure that project managers make every attempt to purchase materials and labor from Ohio-based businesses where possible (Kissling, 1989f). The job creation potential of Gateway also led the Organization of Minority Businesses and several local religious leaders to support the project ("Minority Business," 1990). On April 18, the *Plain Dealer* reported that Reverend E.T. Caviness of Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church used a sermon delivered on Easter Sunday to preach the benefits of the proposed development (DeLater, 1990h).

Political leaders also voiced significant support for the project. Gateway proponents received endorsements from leading Democratic and Republican Party gubernatorial candidates for governor (Luttner, 1990b). Democratic candidate and former state attorney general, Anthony Celebrezee Jr., and Republican candidate and former Cleveland Mayor, George Voinovich, strongly supported the project. On April 25, the *Plain Dealer* reported that the proposed development was supported unanimously by The Citizens League's board of trustees, as well as a group of 31 mayors from surrounding jurisdictions (Kissling, 1990g). While the majority of City councilors supported the project, Council President, Michael Westbrook, noted that the body would not vote on the volatile issue (Becker, 1990b). On May 1, however, Westbrook held a news conference to announce that 14 council members endorsed the Gateway project (Becker, 1990c). During the press conference, the council members stated the facility would generate significant economic development, and thus allow the city to help fund necessary social service programs (Becker, 1990c).

In a front-page article on May 3, the *Plain Dealer* announced that Gordon Gund, co-owner of the NBA Cavaliers, signed a long-term lease agreement in principle to play in the 20,000-seat arena portion of the Gateway Project (DeLater, 1990i). The 20-year agreement stipulated that Gund would be responsible for managing the facility, and outlined that public funds would not cover operating losses (DeLater, 1990i). Mayor White and County Commissioner Hagan mentioned that Gund would not be compensated for leaving the NBA Cavaliers' current home, the Richfield Coliseum, which they owned. Team spokesman, Richard Watson, said that it was a difficult decision for the owners to move the NBA franchise away from loyal fans in Richfield. However, Watson argued that the downtown location would be more lucrative as it could attract more events, and offer improved premium seating options (DeLater, 1990i). While Gund expressed interest in developing the land that surrounded the Gateway Project, Mayor White, noted that such development opportunities would be open to a fair bidding process (DeLater, 1990i).

With less than a week remaining before the May 8 election, MLB Commissioner Fay Vincent addressed the City Council Committee on May 2 as a baseball stadium expert at the request of City Council President, Jay Westbrook (Becker and Mio, 1990). During the informational session, Vincent said his preference was for the MLB Indians to remain in Cleveland, but noted that due to the poor financial performance, low attendance, and outdated facilities, the team met three of his four criteria for franchise relocation. The final criterion, community support, could be partially gauged from the results of the Gateway

Project referendum – a negative vote would indicate the team has lost support within the community (Becker and Mio, 1990). Furthermore, Vincent pointed out that communities such as Baltimore and Chicago had employed generous public subsidizations in order to finance new facilities, and cautioned that several cities were interested in acquiring a MLB franchise (Becker and Mio, 1990).

On May 6, the *Plain Dealer* published a front-page editorial supporting the proposed Gateway Project ("Gateway to the Future," 1990). Reiterating MLB commissioner Fay Vincent's message regarding the potential for franchise relocation, the editorial urged residents to vote for the development in order to both retain the MLB Indians and attract the NBA Cavaliers to the Central Market site. Furthermore, the editorial suggested that the project would create economic spin-off opportunities that would benefit the entire community and ensure its bright future as a major league city ("Gateway to the Future,"1990). Directly beside the editorial on the front page, the *Plain Dealer* reported the results of an opinion poll regarding project (Luttner, 1990c). The newspaper conducted a telephone survey of 600 registered Cuyahoga County voters and found that 62.5% of likely voters planned to support the sin tax. However, support for the project reportedly fell to 49.7% among those voters less likely to vote (Luttner, 1990c).

The Result

On May 8, 1990, Cuyahoga County voters narrowly approved the Gateway proposal. The overall margin of victory for the issue was 51.7% – 48.3% (Kissling, 1990h). Support for Gateway varied widely between city and suburban voters. Only one of the city's 21 electoral wards supported the project. Overall,

56.2% of Cleveland voters rejected the Gateway proposal (Luttner, 1990d). The project, however, was supported by 54.6% of suburban voters who were more active at the polls than city voters. Robert Hughes, chairman of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, reported that 51% of county suburban voters cast ballots for Gateway, compared with only 32.7% of Clevelanders (Luttner, 1990d).

The *Plain Dealer* reported that Gateway supporters spent over $1 million during the campaign (Kissling, 1990i). In contrast, the newspaper outlined that UAW, one of the most active opposition groups, spent $31,175 attempting to defeat the proposal. State Representative and Gateway Project opponent, Louis Stokes, held that this financial advantage enabled supporters to secure the election victory (Kissling, 1990i). Similarly, UAW representative, Robert Nece, claimed that Gateway supporters bought the election and argued that, given equal resources, the opposition would have been successful in defeating the issue (Kissling, 1990i).

After the election, stadium development proponents established the Gateway Economic Development Corporation as a non-profit corporation in order to oversee the project. Thomas Chema was named executive director of the entity that was governed by a seven-member board of trustees, appointed by both city and county officials (Kissling and DeLater, 1990). Planning for the project began immediately following the vote. The Gateway Economic Development Corporation merged with the New Stadium Corporation in order to transfer the land acquired for stadium development (Kissling, 1990j). The sin tax was implemented on August 1, 1990 (Kissling, 1990k), and groundbreaking for the

facilities began in early 1992. HOK sports facility group designed the baseball stadium, while Ellerbe & Becket and Robert P. Madison International designed the arena. Both baseball and basketball team owners purchased naming rights for the facilities – the baseball stadium was named Jacobs Field, while the basketball arena was named Gund Arena. On April 4 1994, President Bill Clinton threw the ceremonial first pitch as Jacobs Field was opened to a game between the MLB Indians and the Seattle Mariners. Gund Arena opened on October 17, 1994 for a Billy Joel concert. The NBA Cavaliers played their first game in the arena later in the fall. In 1997, both facilities hosted their respective league All-Star games. Jacobs Field played host to the 1995 and 1997 World Series where the Indians lost to the Atlanta Braves and the Florida Marlins, respectively.

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APPENDIX C

Frame Frequencies

1984 Economic Development Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	55%	29%	28%
Editorials	69%	N/A	33%
Letters	63%	17%	20%

1990 Economic Development Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	42%	18%	37%
Editorials	67%	N/A	N/A
Letters	43%	4%	N/A

1984 Civic Status Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	55%	43%	19%
Editorials	56%	N/A	100%
Letters	21%	6%	30%

1990 Civic Status Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	71%	9%	15%
Editorials	33%	N/A	N/A
Letters	40%	8%	N/A

1984 Civic Priorities Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	18%	36%	17%
Editorials	63%	N/A	33%
Letters	13%	29%	N/A

1990 Civic Priorities Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	13%	55%	15%
Editorials	17%	N/A	25%
Letters	3%	24%	N/A

1984 Financing Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	27%	71%	58%
Editorials	63%	N/A	67%
Letters	21%	54%	30%

1990 Financing Frame	**Pro**	**Con**	**Neu**
Articles	63%	91%	65%
Editorials	67%	N/A	100%
Letters	53%	69%	60%